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my grandmother who, with her plot of paddy land and her fruit and vegetable gardens, was among the wealthiest in the village, never connected these with her children or those of her friends.

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Grandfather died when quite young, leaving my Paw-Pwa (Grand-mother) with four sons and two daughters, of whom my father wa[illegible]e eldest. Like all the boys of the village, my father after eight or nine years of unrestrained childish delights when he could play all day, in the stream and up and down the village streets, stopping only when hungry or tired, wheedling the grown-ups to let him sit up till late at night listening to stories, was sent to the monastery on the outskirts of the village. The word for monastery in Burmese, *kyaung*, is the same as the word used for school, and it was to be taught learning and holiness, obedience and discipline, dexterity in manual and domestic tasks, and to be given a deep spiritual influence to last throughout life, that Grandmother and her friends sent their sons there. The parents whose hearts suffered too much at the thought of inflicting any punishment themselves now handed them over to the monks with the plea that they would teach them to be good and obedient, and chastise them severely if they did not obey.

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The kyaung at Ye, like all kyaungs in Burma, was built in surroundings chosen for their pleasantness. On a slight slope overlooking the stream was a pagoda, the pagoda of the village where the people came on fasting and feast days to kneel on the paved platform around the tapering golden spire and recite the precepts. Down from the platform the steps were lined with shady trees, and to one side of this was the monastery, a wooden building with verandahs and tiered roofs, set in a large garden, containing a few flower beds for offerings at the altars, but chiefly wide shady spaces, great trees including a *nyaung-bin* (a sacred banyan, with huge spreading branches), flowering *gangaw* trees and deep green mango trees. In one corner was a well.

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The monks consisted of the *saya-daw*, the senior monk who acted as head and abbot, about twenty monks who had been formally admitted to the order and were called *upasins*, and a number of novices who were wearing the yellow robe either for a short time, or to be admitted as monks later on. My father and his companions were admitted as *kyaungthas*, scholars. The monks spent their days in the recitation of religious formulæ and teachings, in meditation, in the telling of beads and the teaching of scholars. They did this while observing a strict and simple life, abstaining from solid food after noon, possessing no goods except the essential articles laid down in the monastic rules, observing chastity and poverty. To the people of the village they were the embodiment of good and holiness, living the noblest and most meritorious life a man can live. The people addressed them in conversation as

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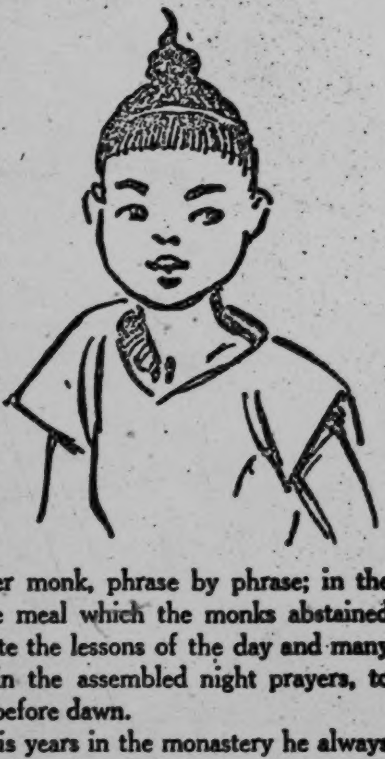
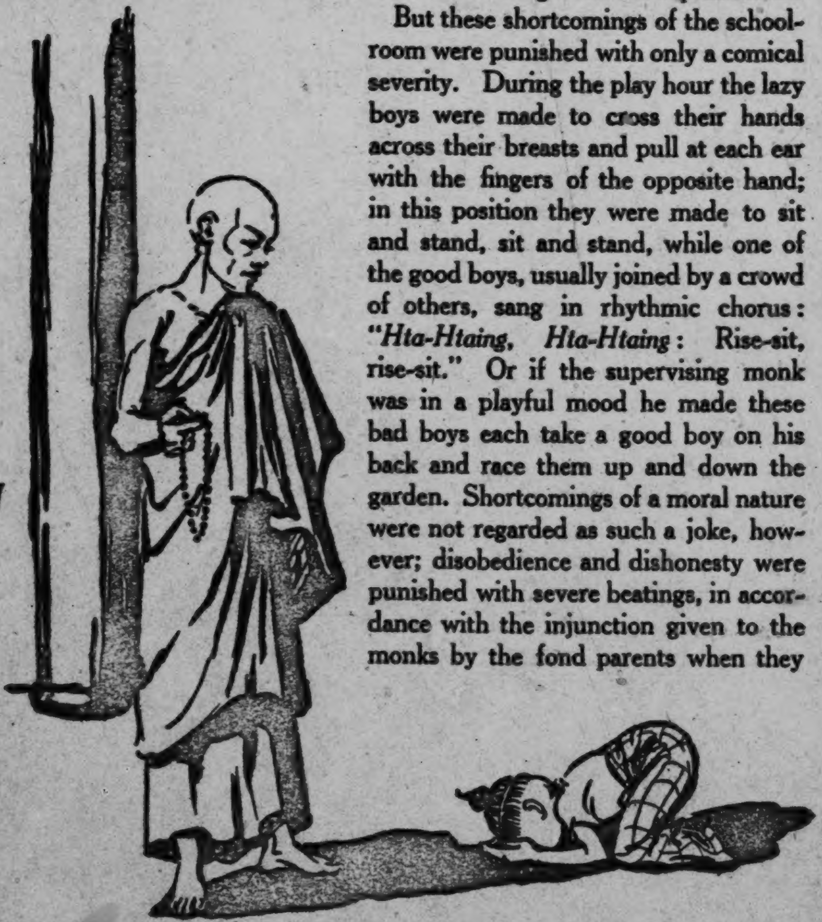
"Your holiness" and themselves as "Your holiness' pupil". The monks 792●
addressed the people as *daga*, giver, for they lived by the gifts of the 181
people who donated robes, household articles and other necessities to the [431]
monasteries, as good works which brought them merit.

When my grandparents took my father to the kyaung he was a 858
frightened little boy dressed in a cotton skirt called a *longyi*, and a shirt 792
without cuffs and collar; his hair was grown long in the centre and tied 872
in a knot, the sides being cut in a fringe about two inches long all round, 302
and the rest shaved clean, a way of growing hair common to both little boys and girls and enhancing their youthful appearance. He and all the other scholars performed the domestic tasks of the monastery, swept and rubbed the good hard wooden floors, the monastery grounds and pagoda steps, because in these precincts all comers went barefoot; they drew water for drinking, and for the bath of the older monks; they followed the monks on their rounds, two of them bearing a pole on which was slung a covered tray, to take any food donated in excess of what would go into the monk's bowl; they waited on the monks at meals; they learned to read and write, and do simple sums, to recite precepts and religious passages which they shouted at the tops of their childish voices in imitation of the deep intoning voice of the teacher monk, phrase by phrase; in the evenings they went home to eat the meal which the monks abstained from, but came back at sunset to recite the lessons of the day and many past days all over again, to join in the assembled night prayers, to sleep in the monastery and rise again before dawn.



When my father spoke to us of his years in the monastery he always 872
chuckled with delight, in spite of this long list of disciplined tasks. He 659
had the advantage from the first; he was stronger and taller than other 876
boys, and in a system where all learning was by heart he had brilliant memorising powers. The school-room of the kyaung had not the formal atmosphere of the Western school-room with each child at a desk and chair, and a silence except for the voice of teacher or child. The monastery boys all went into the same big room of the monastery, irrespective of age or stage, each with his slate or book, got down on the floor

872 next to their friends, crouched over their work and started to shout out
854 whatever passage was being committed to memory. My father's chuckling
876 was at being able to remember how his voice was lustier than his rival's as
he rested on his elbows and knees, and rocked backwards and forwards in rhythm to his chanting, with his legs going as high as he dared, giving surreptitious kicks and nudges to upset the balance of his similarly rocking rival, shouting out the passages all wrong when the supervising monk was at the other end of the room and could not distinguish his voice in the general din, so as to cause his rival to laugh and be reprimanded.



But these shortcomings of the schoolroom were punished with only a comical severity. During the play hour the lazy boys were made to cross their hands across their breasts and pull at each ear with the fingers of the opposite hand; in this position they were made to sit and stand, sit and stand, while one of the good boys, usually joined by a crowd of others, sang in rhythmic chorus: "*Hta-Htaing, Hta-Htaing*: Rise-sit, rise-sit." Or if the supervising monk was in a playful mood he made these bad boys each take a good boy on his back and race them up and down the garden. [861] Shortcomings of a moral nature were not regarded as such a joke, however; disobedience and dishonesty were punished with severe beatings, in accordance with the injunction given to the monks by the fond parents when they handed their children over: "*So yin na na yaik pa*: If he is naughty
892 please beat him hard."

561 My father spent about five years like this. The hair of his top-knot
792 grew longer year by year and it was nearing the time when he should cut

it off, offer it to his mother as a tress for her hair-dressing, and have his 872
head shaved and be initiated into the monkhood amidst feasting and 561
rejoicing. This initiation, which every Buddhist boy went through in 792
order to attain his true manhood by wearing the yellow robe, would last only a week or a month, or as long as my father felt the urge to remain in the monastery; for ever if he liked, in which case he would be formally received as an upasin. It was expected, however, that he would leave after a few months and help Grandmother and the aunts with looking after the paddy and the gardens. A train of accidents upset all these schemes.

When my father was about 14 he was already among the oldest boys 872
in the kyaung, his learning was high and his conduct exemplary. The 792
monks gave him the task of guarding the meat-safe where all the stores 861
of sweetmeats given to the monastery were kept, as well as delicious titbits like the roe of *nga-tha-lauk* fish, and the rich red oil of the heads of lobsters, which were kept over for the meals of the monks on following days. These wire-netted cupboards are called "cat-houses" in Burmese, because they are meant to guard the food from depredations of cats, and they serve the purpose very well, but they could never guard against the appetites of little boys; for my father, even as I knew him in later years, loved people to eat good things and would always soften and allow his companions to have a bit just here and there. He was often scolded for it, but was so well-behaved otherwise that the post was not taken from him. Just at this time, however, a supervising monk with very decided ideas of discipline was given charge of the boys; all the faults of disobedience, telling of falsehoods, running off to the village at forbidden hours and such like, were stored up till the end of the month. Then, on punishment day, the monk would gather a pile of sticks beside him, and all the boys with faults in a row before him, and go through beating them, one stick to one boy until it broke. One month my father was included in this row because the inroads on the meat-safe stores had increased in spite of constant warnings. Being a big boy he was left to the end of the row, and could watch the zealous monk methodically working through the boys and the sticks. What we know of my father and physical pain is that my mother was once scolded very severely the only time in her life that she beat any of us, and that he himself, when about to take nasty medicine or a vaccination, would go through a series of shiverings and comical protests, some of which I am sure were quite genuine. My poor father then watched the pile of sticks diminishing, and when there were but three sticks left and three boys between him and the untiring monk he suddenly took to his heels and fled, right out of the monastery grounds, down the pagoda hill and down to the creek. He did not dare

872 to go home because Grandmother would have sent him back for a double
792 beating, so he hitched up his longyi, tied his shirt round his head and
861 swam across the stream. One of the huts on the other bank belonged to
a woman who had always been very fond of him because she believed
[775] him to be a reincarnation of her brother who had died in childhood; Burmese Buddhists believe that one goes through many existences on this earth, and sometimes children are born who have not yet forgotten their previous existence by the time they can talk; they adopt habits uncannily like those of the departed member who, the fond and grieving relatives hope, has returned to them in the guise of this new child; they say "My bed", "My clothes" to the possessions of the dead person, especially if eggs are not included in their diet, the belief being that eggs cause them to forget. When we were very young, the fame of a wonder child, who could recite the most learned religious passages untaught, spread throughout Burma, and my parents travelled to hear him; he had been a monk in his past existence and could remember.

792 My father's case was no outstanding one like this; he had just resembled
561 the lady's brother in looks and gesture, and a few childish utterances
helped out by her belief had endeared my father to her as having been *winsa* (come in and inhabited) by her brother. The good and fond lady received the boy with open arms, agreed that he was getting too old for the monastery, and promised to go over and plead with my grandmother to take him out now and hasten his initiation ceremony into the priesthood. This was achieved and my father went back to his mother's house and prepared for the *shinbyu* as the ceremony was called.

484 The manner of his exit from the monastery, however, had made
177 him restless. During the short period he was free, he could go where
874 he willed, and in this way he often met traders who came and went between
Ye and Tavoy, a seaport town about 100 miles away, to which passenger and cargo ships from Moulmein made regular trips. One day he was at the house on the opposite bank when a boy he used to know as a toddler returned from Tavoy after a trip to Moulmein. This boy could speak a few words of English. Moreover, he wore his hair in a *boha-dauk* (a Westerner's crop) and seemed to think my father a jungle boy. All the restlessness in my father flowed over then, because up to now he had always felt himself clever and ahead of other boys. He worried Grandmother to let him go to Moulmein and learn English, and and get a job with the government which would bring them hundreds of rupees each month. Other families who considered that Grandmother had clever sons agreed that this would be a good idea; though none of them had been to Moulmein and my father was still a boy, it would not be so daring an adventure as it sounded, because there was some one

779 881 ●792 It is this renunciation[1] which we symbolize in the shinbyu ceremony when a boy leaves his home and lives in the order. A parent who fails to hold the ceremony or get his son initiated in some other way fails in his first duty towards his son, and those who hold a shinbyu for orphans or the sons of the poor achieve great merit.

To provide a background symbolic of Prince Siddhartha's circumstances, parents spend as much as they can afford; a flagged pavilion is put up before the house, a multitude of people are invited for feasting, the boy is dressed in princely garments and jewels, and rides around the town on a white horse, with a procession following. For him to return and wash the powder off his face, to doff the turban and show the newly shaven head, to change the glittering clothes of silk for a plain yellow [292] robe showing golden on the bare brown skin,—this is moving indeed. And when he comes back the next day in procession with other monks, his eyes cast down and his bowl before him, his mother makes obeisance to him for the first time, not as her son now but as one of the priestly order, a hpongyi, a "great glory". That must be a moment of spiritual plenitude in a mother's life.

881 792 I do not remember much about my brother's shinbyu, but I remember the beauty of his face as he came back in procession on that first day. A good face has its nobility enhanced by the complete absence of such adornment, even as is provided by the frame of hair or the line of neck clothing; it has to stand alone. I am often struck with the beautiful calm faces of some older monks. There is a look of repose which they wear easily after years of daily meditation and freedom from petty irritations and personal relationships, and a glow to the brown skin which is the result of years spent in clean and open surroundings, with sufficient to eat, and regularity of hours; the strongly marked eyebrows giving a nobility to the face when the head has been shorn. The unconscious reflection of this look on the face of a small boy touches us profoundly; there is a sweet solemnity on the young shaven face; the most mischievous boys become awed and chastened without any prompting.

881 792 565 [563] In recent years, we have had a full dress shinbyu in the family for my husband's nephew, Sao Sai Long, who as the heir to the Shan State of Kengtung was initiated into the priesthood with the full panoply due to Buddhist royalty. A long wide bamboo pavilion was set up, beginning with a high shelf for the offerings to all the monasteries in the town, the next platform for the monks who were to receive Sao Sai Long into their monastery, the next lower for the attendant boys who were also to be initiated, and for the *palin* (the jewelled *chaise longue* on which Sao Sai Long was to recline), the next for the family, and successively lower ones for the various grades of the people. (The

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[1] [i.e., The Great Renunciation of Prince Siddhartha--Analyst]

European officials and friends were given chairs in deference to their 881
stiffer joints, but the chairs which eventually raised them higher than 792
the family were placed on a side platform which had been cleverly made
two inches lower than the family's platform.) On the day of the actual 565
initiation, tall vases on the high shelf held robes, fans and slippers as offerings to the monks, and rupee coins put into long net cylinders to get around the rule that monks should not touch money. Sitting against this were a row of monks with eyes downcast, below and before them were the *shinlaungs*, sixteen little attendant boys all powdered white with silk clothes and golden chains around their necks. On the couch sat Sao Sai Long, Sao Thiri Raza, his face unpowdered but glowing with the beauty of his race, his clothes of finest silk and gold, on his head a jewelled crown sitting proudly above his young face.

Three days in succession before the actual initiation day he sat like this in front of the assembled people, and when the drums took up the strange sad music which is traditionally played for the departure of a king, he stepped into a throne-seat that was lifted high on an elephant to go in procession round the town. The music and the splendour of Buddhist kingship in these days of government officials stirred the unrealized, half forgotten roots in our breasts; it made us feel things we had known in some other world and brought tears to our eyes. Sao Sai Long, my nephew aged 14, who had just returned from a year at King's School, Canterbury, who had never given me a moment's peace with his affectionate and irreverent ways, and who is even now riding wildly round an Australian sheep farm, felt and looked a dignity which he has never achieved before or since, as he was lifted high on an elephant and rode around his beautiful old city with its big trees and mountains, with spears, banners, white and gold umbrellas before him, a king for the last time in full pomp. He must have felt like Tamurlaine:

> Oh, 'tis passing fair to be a king,
> And ride in triumph through Persepolis.

CHAPTER SEVEN

805 527 ROUND about the end of January each year, for our lunar dates do not fall on the same calendar dates every year, we celebrated my father's birthday. All Burmese celebrations have a basis of "doing merit" either in feasting people and perhaps fasting oneself, distributing gifts, or inviting monks to preach and others to hear them. An atmosphere of enjoyment is possible in these good works because Burmese people do not believe in divorcing their praying from their merry-making; usually both are carried out in the same room, the pleasure after the holiness; and the donor feels a great satisfaction of spirit as he says; "*A-hmya a-hmya* : Share with all, share with all (the merit from his good deed)." The friends gathered around reply to this "*Tha-du, tha-du* : Well done, well done."

527 352 On my father's birthday monks were "lifted" or invited to the house for a grand meal. All the Western chairs and tables were moved out of the sitting room; and one end of the room was laid with carpets of red and green rose design, specially kept for such occasions in all Burmese houses. This was for the monks to sit on and facing them the people would sit on mats. Between the monks and people were laid out all the presents for the monastery.

•742 I was always sad when I saw these presents; to my childish eyes they
192 looked so uninteresting. A monk who renounces worldly goods is
allowed to possess only eight articles, three pieces of cloth which form
[437] his robes, a begging bowl, a mat, a blade, a needle and a water strainer. Dagas or donators can, therefore, only give these, or other articles necessary to the way of life conforming to their precepts. Such include religious books, mats, candles and matches, brooms, spittoons. These last make very elegant presents, and are a common sight at all distributions of presents, the standard pattern being of white enamel, with a red band around the edge. Children are told of one monastry whose holiness is so high that a spittoon donated to the monks there will echo the name of the donator each time a monk spits into it. With the presents all laid out, the monks walk in in a row, and sit with eyes downcast and legs crossed. My mother and father make obeisance to them and send for us after a few words with the chief monk. We were always nervous and subdued on these occasions; in speaking to a monk a vocabulary of honorifics has to be used, even for "Yes". The hpongyi always made

joking enquiries about whether we were getting enough Buddhist and 792•
Burmese teaching for we were attending English Christian schools at 192
the time.

The monks have lost all touch with the schooling of the great 792
majority of children by now. In the first decade of the century the 871
monastic schools were still the backbone of instruction for boys through- 177.
out all the rural districts, being responsible for the high literacy figure
of 49% for Burman males, as compared with 11.9% in Madras at the 87
time. But lay schools, either established and run on Burman lines, or established by Christian missionary societies with perhaps grants-in-aid, or under the direct management of Government or a committee acting on behalf of the government, were springing up on all sides, until by 1934 the proportion of lay to recognized monastic schools for vernacular education was about five to one. Although there had been attempts to raise the utilitarian value of monastic education by the encouragement of such subjects as arithmetic, geography and land surveying, it was far easier for the lay schools to conform to the standards set by the Board of Examiners. With the passing of such standards becoming the means of obtaining employment and the changing of fashions, more and more children went to the lay schools. Moreover, the lay schools included schools for girls, either separately or in common with boys.

In my childhood there were still echoes of the opposition between 792
monastic and secular education. In about 1922 my Uncle Pyant, who 871
was then a serious student at the University, told me the world was 821
round, "but", he added, "the hpongyis say that this is not true and most elder people don't believe it." My husband also tells me that when he went home from his government school with the statement that the earth spun around on its axis and took twenty-four hours to do it, the elders were most scornful. "In that case," they said, "if you were to go up into the air and stay there for some time, you could not come down to Kengtung until the same time the next day, but might land in England for your lunch."

Another difference between old and new ideas of education was that 792
the elder people were aghast at the long years which a modern educa- 871
tion from primary schools to University lasted. They felt that at least
one must have learnt everything there was to learn by then, for a few 177.
years at a monastery taught a boy all the reading, writing, calculation 87
and literature which any grown man was expected to know. Once my grandfather received a telegram announcing the birth of a grandson; the message contained the additional information that the doctors had found it necessary to perform a circumcision on the infant. The telegram w[illegible] [206]
in English, according to the rules of the Posts and Telegraphs in Burma,

792 and Grandfather called my cousin Ko Lu Pe to read it. My cousin had
871 been at a government school for some years and though he could read
177. and write English with some ease, he stuck at the word "circumcise".
87 "What!" exploded Grandfather, "five years learning English, and you can't even read a telegram. This education is quite useless." Whereupon he took the grandchildren and his two young sons out of their schools until his wrath subsided and they quietly started attendance again. It is a popular stage joke also, the B.A. who returns to his village and is asked in good faith by the hpongyi to mend a villager's watch that has gone wrong. The graduate confesses that he cannot mend it. The monk is horrified: "What, passed B.A. and cannot mend a watch?"

527 So now on my father's birthday the monks ask jokingly and kindly
792 about our school subjects. Their meal is laid out on a low round table,
574 and consists of all the good things my mother can think of, for they have only one main meal in the day. Rice and meat and vegetable dishes are followed by fruit, sweet milky coffee, sweet English cakes. The monastery boys are given their meal outside; the monks, after eating, rise and go, and the boys follow them bearing away the gifts for the monastery. At once there is a general shuffling into more relaxed positions, conversation swells out, we start to scamper around and help to wheel in more round tables. Then everybody eats, and my father feels a deep sense of well-being.

805 Our lunar calendar has twelve months in its year, beginning the new year about the middle of April with the month of *Tagu*. Each month contains the twenty-nine to thirty days of the moon's cycle, but the dates are numbered with only 15 numbers—15 waxing days starting from the crescent of the new moon: *la-hsan ta-yet, la-hsan hna-yet*, new moon first day, second day and so on, until the 15th and full moon day, *la-pyit nay*: after which come the waning days, *la-hsot*. With this system, we are 12 or 13 days short of the 365 each year, and hence every second year there occurs a double month of *Waso*, in July and August, which month also starts our Lent. Lent lasts the three months of the monsoon, until
796 *Thadingyut*, in October, when we see it out with lights, feasting and
262 much merriment. For the observance of festivals such as New Year and Thadingyut we usually visited relatives, but certain other observances came round each year to us in our own home.

Such is *htamanè-hto*, the making of a comestible known as *htamanè* in vast quantities, for distribution on the first full moon after the harvest. On the full moon night of *Tabodwè* in January-February, the villagers sit up all night in big parties of men and women singing and joking as they make all preparations for the cooking that is to take place by dawn. The basis of htamanè is a glutinous rice called *kaukhnyin*, always

never talked about the business of their past working days when they 887
met. Sometimes they showed a fleeting interest in news of the postings 521
of friends still in service, but even the official matters of Thaton district .
itself did not enter into their discussions. They talked of charity donations, [822]
of the respective monasteries which they endowed and attended, and of formulæ of *eggaya-hto*, alchemy, or the search for the philosopher's stone which will turn all metals to gold. Most Burmans get interested in eggaya-hto during their later years, even if few now practise it.

This alchemy, which has no place among the true teachings of 822
Buddhism, has to be done under auspicious astrological influences and is 792•
usually carried on in secret. Burman Buddhists condemn the use of it 779
when it is carried on for *lawba*, greed for riches, but others justify the process as a means of concentrating the mental faculties. The common stories tell of hermits in the forests, who by their ascetic life and concentrated meditation have more powers over the forces of nature, as being well versed in the processes of alchemy. When such a hermit achieves the extreme concentration of mind on his task he is successful—the philosopher's stone is discovered, the body of the hermit then disappears in the dissolving of matter, and his spirit is free to live unhampered by the body, till the arrival of the next Buddha on the earth. Most Burmese women, however, although they believe that this happens in the case of hermits, object very strongly to the practice of alchemy on the part of their menfolk, owing to the money and energy that is wasted on seeking out new and expensive formulæ once the craze has got hold of a man. All experiments are started with mercury which is melted with other minerals, animal or vegetable substances which derive their magical properties partly from their inaccessibility, partly from being treated with prescribed rites. My father had no intention of taking up alchemy and impoverishing us, but he too was very interested to hear of the success and failure of various methods. These discussions must have been kept well anchored to reality by the other chief topic of discussion—the families of the pensioners.

The five duties of a parent towards his children include the settling 593
of the child in a good marriage. By the time the a-so-ya mins retire, 584
their sons and daughters have reached a marriageable age. The sons 554
are in the process of winning a good position in one of the government 177.
services and their daughters have been dressed with an adequate
amount of jewellery. The marriage market, which had no existence in 58
former Burmese society and which still is unheard of in Ye, and among 565
the poorer people, is now a very concrete institution among the educated and modern classes. The rise of the minkadaw class and of higher paid Class I government officials has been mainly responsible for this. More

pg 14

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL DAYS

871 792 346 I SUPPOSE Englishmen will never get rid of the notion that monastic schools must needs be dull and dismal, that hours of study only alternate with seasons of austerity and rough punishments. The uninhabited, almost deserted, appearance of the Burmese kyoung; its isolated position; the solemn, restful front which it always preserves, no matter how lightened up by profuse gilding and the carved magnificence of its panels and eaves' boards, or how embowered in rich and waving foliage; the austere aspect and slow-paced gait of the mendicants in their sad yellow robes—all these things inevitably encourage the foreigner in the belief that the monotony and the discipline must crush all life and lightheartedness out of the young scholars.

871 524 Nothing, however, can be farther from the actual fact. No Etonian, no old Rugbeian, can look back with greater delight on triumphs on the river or in the football field, than the grown-up Burman does on his early days at the Pôngyi Kyaung. There are no rough games to remember, it is true, no strivings of any kind with members of another institution. Those things do well enough for a cold-country people. The Burman's reminiscences are of a quieter kind. There was the emulation with the chin lôn, the wicker football, to see who could keep it longest in the air by dexterous use of knee, foot, shoulder, thigh, and cheek. How it relieved the body and freshened the mind after hours of poring over little hand-blackboards, covered with cramped words and letters, in the quiet rooms inside. Then there were the games at gônnyinhto, an elementary combination of skittles

and ninepins, played with the big flat seeds of a jungle 871
creeper. Pleasant they were under the shade of the great 524
mango and pipul trees and the lofty cocoa-nut and palmyra
palms, and exciting were the games, so that the customary
stillness of the place was rudely broken upon by disputing
voices, till a monk would come out and bring all back to
work again as a penance. Then during the work there was 871
the fun of the writing hour, when everybody had to write 212
out maxims and prayers on his little parabaik with a clumsy 876
pointed steatite pencil. There were always some stiff-fingered
big pupils who could not manage to write their
copy neatly or correctly, and as punishment had to take
the good writers on their backs and march ruefully up and
down the long schoolroom during pleasure. Sometimes
they were thrashed, but the other punishment was the more
dreaded. Then there was the schoolmaster monk, who 872
would tell fairy stories of the other three great islands which 792
lie in the sea round about Myinmo mountain; of the half- 815
moon-faced western islanders, and the wondrous tree that [772]
bore everything eatable one could wish for and delivered it
ready cooked; the joys of the six heavens of the Nats and
the grisly horrors of Nga-yè, with its fearful ages of fantastic
punishments. Every now and again travelling necro- [789]
mancers and hmaw sayās would spend a night or two at
the monastery, and in recompense for the little delicacies
and odds and ends of food which good-natured neophytes
would get for them, used to tell stories of witchery and
marvel. Sometimes there would be a sā-haw yā, a kind [773]
of cyclic poet, who knew half the zats in the language by
heart, and would recite a little just for practice. Or a [364]
tattooing sayā would come round and mark some particularly
favoured youth with a quaint figure. Discussion as to
its meaning and probable virtues would be carried on in the
shadowy evenings for months afterwards. Varieties of this
kind recur to the old Burman as he thinks of the school
days long ago, and he sighs with as much conviction as
any European that there are no days so happy as the
school days.

English rule has disturbed old customs a good deal in 871
the province, but even now we may say that, as an invari- [177.87]

871 able rule, when a boy has reached the age of eight or nine
years he goes as a matter of course to the Pôngyi Kyaung.
871 It is open to all alike—to the poor fisherman's son as well
212 as to the scion of princely blood—for no one pays anything,
● 792 and it is not carefully considered who it is that fills the
561 monkish begging pots in the daily round. Thus every
Buddhist boy in the country is taught to read and write,
and in this respect at least there are but very few illiterate
Burmans. This primary education must by no means be
confounded with entry into the monastery as a koyin-gale,
or novice. Strictly speaking, this ceremony ought not to
take place before the age of fifteen, and the earlier sojourn
is only a preparation for it. The younger pupils may become
boarders in the monastic building if they choose, but
they do not assume the yellow robe, which marks them, for
however short a time it may be worn, as members of the
Assembly of the Perfect. They wear their ordinary clothes
and retain their secular name.

As soon as the boy enters the monastery he is set down
816 in the big schoolroom beside all the other boys, and receives
812 a roughly-made black wooden slate. On this are written a
few of the letters, perhaps the whole of the alphabet. A
little explanation starts him off, and for the next few days
he is engaged in shouting out their sounds at the top of his
voice. Nobody minds him, for all the other scholars are
similarly engaged in hallooing, and the monks derive a sense
of comfort and a virtuous consciousness of doing good from
the noise. It is as soothing as the sound of his mill-wheels
to the miller, or the roar of traffic to the cockney. If a boy
stops shouting, it is a sign that he has stopped working—
and if he is not meditating mischief, it is probable that he is
about to go to sleep, and he is corrected accordingly. The
method is an admirable one for keeping the boys occupied
—much more so than civilised Western methods—though I
fear a council of English head-masters would scout the idea.
The casual foreign observer who goes about taking notes,
like Grose or the "Rampant M.P.," passes the ecclesiastical
school, and in amazement at the seeming uproar within,
declares that monastery schools are hopelessly badly conducted,
and without the semblance of discipline. As a

872 on the whole future life of the young scholars. As long as
779 these monastic schools are attended, all attacks on the
Buddhist faith must be fruitless.

872 Besides the commandments, the paya-shekho, and the
779 pareit-yôp-thi, the lauds of the Lord Buddha, and the
● 772 aspirations to be repeated at the holy shrines, the formulæ
to be told over on the beads; besides these first principles,
the young Burman is taught the thin-ki-ya, the rules which
are to prepare him for assuming the yellow robe, and to
guide him during his longer or shorter withdrawal from the
sinful world to the calm tranquillity of the monastery. He
must learn that the young novice carefully imitates the
decorous pace of the yahan; does not walk fast; avoids
swinging his hands; does not smile or laugh in passing
through a village, and keeps far away from all secular amusements.
[292] The yellow robe, distinctive of the order, is to be
regarded not as a garment to cherish and comfort the wearer,
not as a robe to adorn the outward man and make it look
stately or pious, but merely as a concession to modesty,
born of the weaknesses of poor human flesh—and further,
as a means of enabling the worthless frame to endure the
[261] extremes of heat and cold. In the same way food is to be
eaten only to support life. The member of the sacred order
must not think of meal times as an occasion for gratifying
his senses; he must avoid dwelling on the tastiness of
the food and the gratification to his palate which the pious
zeal of a supporter may afford in presenting an unusually
dainty meal. Especially must he refrain from eating food
to make himself strong and lusty. He must always remember
the transitoriness, the misery and unreality of the world, and
find relief in the Triple Consolation, the trust in the Lord,
the Law, and the Assembly.

All these things are impressed on the young pupil as
soon as he is able to read at all, every one of them assuming
the fact that as soon as he is old enough, or as soon as he
has gone through the necessary preparation, he will assume
the yellow robe of the devout, to wear it perhaps for life,
perhaps only for a day or two, but certainly to put it on, for
[885] without this he cannot attain to the full privileges of a man.
[777] His kan (luck) will be altogether one-sided. All the ill deeds

872 779 792 775 186

All the ill deeds he does will swell the sum of his demerits, but not a single good action, no uttermost act of charity or devotion, will be recorded to his advantage for another existence. Without admission to the order, without "Buddhist baptism," no man can count his present existence as other than an animal's. The great gift of having appeared in the likeness of a human being; the happy balancing of merits and demerits which has resulted in so glorious an opportunity of advancing towards Ne'-ban; the still greater fortune of existence in a country where the tenets of Buddhism offer supreme chances to the weary seeker after rest from the moil of a work-a-day world; all will have been recklessly thrown away. It is written that more hardly will a needle cast from the summit of Mount Myinmo across the wide Thamoddaya Sea, more hardly will it touch with its point as it falls another needle standing point upwards in the great Southern Island, than will any given creature become a human being. How are the Western foreigners, black and white, to be pitied, who have indeed by earnest strivings attained the seat of man, but, arrived there, find it all naught because they do not hear the teachings of the Buddha! How much worse the Burman, to whom all his life long the monastery door stands open, to whom a week's, a day's, an hour's sojourn would offer boundless possibilities, and yet who enters not in. If this be so, what then can be the prospect for the boy who having put his hand to the plough turns back, who entering the monastery as a child, imbibes the religious thoughts and becomes acquainted with the religious creed, and yet fails to seek the "humanity" so easily to be gained? Better have been born an animal or an Englishman, and scoffed at what he did not understand.

871 792 177.87

Consequently it may be invariably assumed that the little scholar, as soon as age and acquirements admit, puts on the yellow garb as a finish to his education. This used to include every one. Till the English came and took the country, everybody went to the Pon-gyi-Kyaung. But now there are English government schools; there are Burmese laymen's schools, which neglect religious education altogether, and look to competitive examinations as the end and aim of juvenile existence, as the ne'-ban of school life.

177.87 There is a percentage of thirty-five in the "middle standard" (Government Education Department). What matters if the successful halt and stumble in the pareit-gyi? There are two boys who have a chance in the Calcutta University Matriculation Examinations. It is a matter of indifference that the thingyo is as unknown to them as it is to any poor foreigner. 792 561 177.79 Nevertheless, notwithstanding their shortcomings in this respect, there are but few even of these young Burmans who have not become members of the society, if only for long enough to get their heads shaved and be invested with the yellow dress. Still in these latter years there are a few who have never gone through even this slight ceremony, and the number may be expected annually to increase as Western habits spread more widely over the country. Not till the monastic schools begin to be deserted will the Christian missionary find that his labours have had any effect on the vital energies of the ancient faith of the Buddha. That day is still far off. As yet the government and vernacular lay schools have had very little effect in reducing the number of scholars who go daily to study in the dim-lighted schoolrooms of the monastery. Not even in Rangoon have the monks to call for scholars; they flock there abundantly of their own accord.

CHAPTER III

BUDDHIST BAPTISM

THE term baptism as applied to a youth who enters a monastery 792
in the state of probation (called shin) is not, as many 561
people think, a mere idle analogy borrowed from the
Christian faith. The novice actually and formally receives [551]
a new name to mark his accession to the full dignity of
humanity. The great majority of shins, or ko-yins, are little
boys of twelve or a little older, but occasionally a man
secludes himself from the world at an advanced age. Till a 792
Buddhist has entered the fraternity he cannot claim to be 775
more than a mere animal. He has a lu nāmé, it is true,
a worldly name, but so might any ox, or horse, or elephant.
It is not till he has subjected himself to the discipline of the
kyaung that he can reap the fruits of a holy past and look
forward to a more glorious future.

> The devils in the underworlds wear out
> Deeds that were wicked in an age gone by.

Man has less innocence than the animals, and cannot, like [812]
them, progress by merely omitting to sin. He may make golden stairways of his weaknesses indeed, but before he can do so he must abandon the world, if it is only for twenty-four hours. Then he becomes an upathaka, a believer, and towards another life will hold the gain as well as answer for the loss in the present one, death casting up the debit or credit.

> Higher than Indra's ye may lift your lot,
> And sink it lower than the worm or gnat.

In recognition of this new-gained power the novice drops 000

792 553 775 561 In recognition of this new-gained power the novice drops his secular name and receives a bwè, an honorific title, to mark that it is now open to him to escape from suffering. The name lapses when he returns to the world again, but it is sufficient that he has once borne it. He may now add to his kan, merit, and gain for himself a glorious new life by good works.

[198] This is what is meant by calling the ceremony a baptism. The bwè are almost invariably Pali, or Burmanised Pali names, and follow the same rules with regard to initial letters as the lu nāmé. Thus a Maung Po Myat, born on Thursday, might take the name of Pyinya-Zawta, while the bwè of a Sunday child, Maung An, would be Adesa. This religious or Buddhist (on the analogy of Christian) name is, of course, retained by the regular members of the monastery, and a monk is never addressed by any other when a name is used at all. When he becomes old a U is added, as U Adesa, but it must not be forgotten that [576] the use of a person's name in addressing him is considered very far from being polite in Burma, especially to one of rank and dignity such as a mendicant. On the other hand, one who has returned to the world never uses the bwè, not even when he accomplishes some great religious work such as the foundation of a pagoda, which according to a comforting belief ensures passage to Ne'ban after death.

The entry into the monastic order is therefore certainly the most important event in the life of a Burman, since only under the robe of the recluse and in the abandonment of the world can he completely fulfil the law and hope to find the way to eventual deliverance from the misery of ever-recurring existences. [796] The popular time for the ceremony is just at the beginning of Wā, the Buddhist Lent, which lasts from July to October, roughly speaking. Strict Buddhists make their sons stay throughout the whole Wā. During that season feasts, though they do occur, are very much discountenanced, and dramatic performances are energetically denounced by the religious.

792 561 184 177.84 According to the letter of the law the intending probationers should have reached the age of fifteen, but this regulation has almost entirely lapsed in Lower Burma, among other reasons chiefly because that is just the most

important age for the boy to be learning English and arithmetic, 792
with a view to getting situations under Government or 561
in English merchants' offices. Therefore in the vast majority 184
of cases shin-pyu thi takes place at the age of twelve, or 177.84
perhaps even a year earlier.

If the boy has been a scholar in the monastery beforehand, 792
he is sure to be already prepared in all that is required 872
of him. If not, he gets a few hasty lessons in the duties
that will be incumbent on him. He must address a full [576]
member of the order in such and such language; he
must walk decorously through the streets, keeping his
eyes fixed on the ground six feet before him, and on no
account gaze round him, no matter what exciting events may
be going on; he must wear his thingan and du-gut in the [292]
prescribed fashion; he must eat with dignity and circumspection,
and so on. All these details are set forth in most
minute fashion in a code. When he has mastered the most
essential portions, and has also given proof of an acquaintance
with the ordinary forms of worship, all is ready. His 792
horoscope now comes into requisition, and a bedinsayā 561
or Ponna is called in to determine a lucky day and hour [787]
from the sadā. When this has been settled, three or four 796
girls, the intending koyin-gale's sisters, or friends of the
family, dress themselves up in their finest silks and jewels— [292]
often borrowing a large quantity of the latter—and go round
the town, announcing to all relatives, friends, and neighbours
when the induction will take place, and inviting them to the
feast, presenting the little packet of le'-pet usual on such
occasions. Almost all of these send some little present,
either of money or victuals, to aid in the feast and make it
as grand as possible. Not unseldom, if somebody else's son
is also going to enter the kyaung and the town is not very
large, the two join forces, while occasionally as many as half
a dozen unite, especially if the families are not well off.

On the appointed day the young neophyte dresses in [292]
his finest clothes, and loads himself with all the family gold
chains and jewellery, and as much more as he can borrow for
the occasion. He then mounts a pony or gets into a richly
decorated car. Shaded by gold umbrellas, allowed formerly
on this occasion only in Upper Burma, except to those who [554]
had got a special patent for them from the sovereign...

● 792 561 796 had got a special patent for them from the sovereign, he passes at a foot-pace through the village. A band of music goes before; all his friends and relatives crowd round him decked in their gayest; the young men dancing and singing vigorously; the girls laughing and smiling, with powdered faces and brilliant dresses. Thus he goes in succession to the houses of his relations and of all the local officials, to do them the obeisance due from a younger member of the family, and to bid them farewell. They in turn contribute money towards the expense of the band, and the solace of the supernumeraries. This triumphant march is meant to symbolise the maung-shin's abandonment of the follies of this world, and to recall Prince Theidat's last splendid appearance in Kapilawut, amidst a crowd of rejoicing clansmen and subjects, just previous to his abandonment of family and kingdom to become a homeless mendicant ascetic, and to obtain the Buddhaship under the bawdi tree. When the round of visits has been duly carried out, the procession turns back to the parents' house, where in the meantime the final preparations for the induction and subsequent feast have been concluded. The head of the kyaung to which the young postulants are to be admitted, together with several of his brother monks, are seated at the back of the room on a raised dais, in front of which are ranged the presents intended for the mendicants—heaps of fruit, cooked food, mats, yellow cloth, and so on. The "Talapoins" seated in a row carefully hold up the large lotus-leaf-shaped fans before their faces to shut out from view the female portion of the assemblage. Never is the command to the holy community not to look on woman more necessary and more arduous to observe than at a shin-pyu pwè. Burma's fairest daughters are assembled, bright in rainbow skirts and neckerchiefs, drowsy-scented flowers in the jetty tresses, jewellery flashing on the bosom, the fingers, and ears, the fragrance of thana'ka lingering over the smiling faces. Terrible trial it is for the young monk, if any such there be in the gaing ôk's following, and more imperative the concentration of the mind on the Payeit Gyi and other portions of the sacred writ which are loudly chanted as the postulants return, and the assembly shikhoes to the pon-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

gyis, and settles down to observe the proceedings. The boy throws off all his fine clothes and jewellery, and binds a piece of white cloth round his loins. Then his long hair is cut off close to the head. Often the locks are as much as three or four feet long, and are carefully preserved by the mother or sister, the latter often making them up into ta-su, the tails of hair twisted in with her own to increase the size of her sa-dôn—the knot of hair she wears at the back of her head. When the hair has been cut, the head is carefully shaved, the boy holding it over a cloth held by some of his relations. After this the head is washed in the usual way with a decoction of the seeds and bark of the kin-bôn thi, and rubbed well with saffron. A bath is then taken, and once more he puts on the bright paso, and repairs to the presence of the monks. Near at hand the parents have set ready the thingan, belt, ko-wut, and other yellow robes, the begging-pot and other requisites of the shin. The boy comes forward, prostrates himself three times, raises his hands joined in reverence, and begs, in a Pali formula got up by heart, to be admitted to the Holy Assembly as a neophyte, that he may walk steadily in the path of perfection, enjoy the advantages which result therefrom, and finally attain to the blessed state of Ne'ban. The kyaung po-go with his own hands gives him the garments; he is duly robed; the thabeit is hung round his neck by the strap, and then it is announced formally that he is a member of the monastery. He falls in among the other novices who have come with the mendicants. The abbot perhaps exhorts the assemblage for a short time, and then rising while all the people do obeisance, walks off slowly to the monastery, whither the newly-appointed ko-yins follow him, not unlikely helping to carry the presents which have been given at their induction.

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The feast at the parents' house begins immediately, and of course ends in a pwè, which lasts till dawn. Sometimes, though this is very seldom the case even in Rangoon, the young probationer comes back again the same night and assumes the lay dress. This *pro forma* observance of the ceremony of baptism is, however, vehemently opposed by all the monks who are worth anything. A few boys

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792 561 remain only twenty-four hours in the yellow dress, long enough to enable them to go once at least round the village begging from door to door in the train of the yahans. This, naturally, is very little better than leaving the kyaung immediately. It is considered hardly decent for the shin to leave under seven days of professed membership of the
792 community. Some stay longer—a fortnight, a month, or
796 two months; but all the more earnest believers insist that their sons shall remain at least one Wā, throughout the four months of Lent, in the rainy season. The best course for a fervent Buddhist, who nevertheless does not feel himself, adapted for a monkish life, is to stay over three Wās, one Lent for his father, one for his mother, and one for himself. It is on account of the importance of the Wā to the shin-pyu that most inductions take place at the beginning of that season. Yahans count their seniority by the number of Lents they have spent in the kyaung. A mendicant of twenty Wās must shekho to one of twenty-five, and so on. An individual who has left the holy community to re-enter the world is called a lu-twet, a runaway. On the other hand, a man who has been married, and has afterwards entered the monastery, goes by the name of taw-twet, one who has fled from the jungle of the world. The most revered yahans are those who have held steadfastly by the blameless, austere life of the fraternity since the time when they were first admitted as koyin-gale. Such are called ngè-byu, white, or stainless from youth, and if they attain to advanced age are always sure of a most splendid ceremonial funeral, whether they have been celebrated for piety and learning or not.

792 If the shin-pyu stays on in the kyaung, he continues
871 the same course of studies as he began as a scholar. If he has not already learnt the Payeit Gyi and the Paya Shikho, Pali sermons and forms of worship, or the Mingala Thut, the "Buddhist Beatitudes," he applies himself to them now. The most advanced pore over the metaphysical mysteries of the Abidhamma Konit-gyan, the seven books of the most difficult part of the Bitaghat. These, with the Thingyo and Thadda, afford ample room for consideration to the longest life. The modern system of shortened sojourn in the

kyaungs has led to very imperfect and limited knowledge 792 of these treasuries of sacred knowledge. 871 Formerly it used to be said that the man who did not know the Thadda, [177.87] the Pali "grammar," knew nothing. If this position were [184] insisted on now, the number of ignorant people in Lower Burma would be somewhat startling.

But there are many difficulties before you get to the Abidhamma and its cognate subjects. Even in the Payeit Gyi there is a section called Ta-zet, or Ta-zet-thut, which has the credit of sending many a probationer back to the noisy, sinful world. According to the couplet—

Shin pyet ta-zet,
Loo pyet a-yet.

Brandy sends a man to hell;
Ta-zet spoils the saint as well.

It is a sort of religious *Pons Asinorum.*

Besides prosecuting his religious studies, the shin is 792 required also to attend on the pon-gyis and minister to 735 their wants. 177.79 He must lay before them at fixed times their daily food, the proper supply of water, the well-used betel-box, and whatever else the monk may require. He must of course go round every morning with the other members of the monastery, the begging-bowl strapped round his neck, accepting meekly, without word of thanks, or glance thrown to the right or left, even when he passes his father's house, the food poured in by the pious. When a pon-gyi goes abroad the neophyte may be required to follow, carrying his fan or umbrella, or perhaps an arm-load of palm-leaf books, if a function is to be performed anywhere. According to the strict letter of the law the ko-yin ought to eat only of the food presented in the morning, but a very great laxity has crept in in this respect, not only with the neophytes, but even among the professed members of the order. It is no uncommon thing for the parents of the youth to send in daily a special meal for him, or even, in the case of wealthy families, actually to keep a cook on the monastic premises to prepare his food. Such sybaritism is not by any means [184] uncommon in Lower Burma, though even there hardly approved of. In any good monastery in Upper Burma, or

792 735 177·79 indeed in any monastery at all, even in Mandalay, it would be promptly put a stop to. But where the monks themselves show the example of carnal weakness, the probationers cannot be expected to maintain the old austerity.

792 779 The shin is subject in every way to the discipline of the monastery, but there are very few additional rules really incumbent on him. He has to observe always the Sè-ba Thila, the ten commandments. Five of these are obligatory on all Buddhists at all times: the other five are supposed to be incumbent upon laymen only on sacred days and during Lent. The five universal commandments are:—

1. Thou shalt not take any life at all.
2. Thou shalt not steal.
3. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
4. Thou shalt not lie.
5. Thou shalt not drink intoxicating liquor.

The additional five are:

6. Thou shalt not eat after mid-day.
7. Thou shalt not sing, dance, or play on any musical instrument.
8. Thou shalt not use cosmetics, or colour the face.
9. Thou shalt not sit, stand, or sleep on platforms or elevated places not proper for thee.
10. Thou shalt not touch gold or silver.

785 796 These latter five are, it has been said, imposed upon laymen on sacred days, but the burden is very light, the people observing them or not, accordingly as they are observing the "duty-day." If they are not "keeping the feast," they conduct themselves precisely as they would on any other day, and buy and sell and attend pwès in their ordinary fashion.

779 792 This laxity is, of course, not open to the shins, but it cannot be said that the regulations, except perhaps as to eating, are very irksome. The seventh and eighth commandments seem by themselves peculiar, but they refer to filthy habits more explicitly set forth in the Patimauk, or book of the enfranchisement, containing the 227 sins which

a monk is liable to commit. The ninth refers to the 779
common Oriental dislike to any person of insufficient 792 ●
dignity occupying an elevated place physically above worthier people.

So far, then, the shin is not very grievously burdened 792
in the monastery. But the discipline maintained is very 861
strict. None of the ko-yins or of the boarder-pupils must be out of the monastic limits after the bell has rung. A lay scholar may get permission from the kyaung po-go to sleep at home now and again, but this indulgence is naturally impossible to the neophyte; he must always stay in the monastery. Again, the boarders may run home in the afternoon to get some dinner at their parents' houses, but this the shin cannot do. Breaches of the rules are very severely punished. The culprit's hands are tied high above his head to a post, and the castigator lays on vigorously on the naked back with a stout bamboo. Cases of deliberate cruelty of course occasionally happen, for human nature is the same everywhere, and a Dotheboys Hall is not an entire figment; but they are rare, and on the whole the shin is happy in the monastery, and occasionally in later life looks back with regret to the old, quiet, unruffled, careless life of the pon-gyi kyaung.

In Upper Burma it has actually been his school, for but 792
very few adopt the system of having private teachers to 871
instruct their children; and in Lower Burma it probably 184
contrasts favourably with the uncomfortable hard benches 177.87
and desks of the English institution, and the still more irksome quietness demanded, and steady, prolonged application exacted by the English teacher. Those who have been to both remember most fondly the long dusky monastery schoolroom, where they sat on the floor and shouted out their lessons, and now and again slipped out into the air to take the stiffness out of their limbs with a quarter of an hour at chin lôn, Burmese football. In the English school you learned to make money; in the Burmese school you learned to be happy and contented.

CHAPTER IV

LIFE IN THE MONASTERY

792 A LITTLE before daylight, "when there is light enough to see the veins in the hand," that is to say, in Burma, at half-past five in the morning, in accordance with the dina chariya, the whole monastic community rises, awakened by the sound of the kaladet. This is a big, oblong, trough-shaped bell, made of a piece of wood hollowed out, with little chiselled holes on the side. It is beaten with a wooden mallet, and makes noise enough to rouse the heaviest sleeper. The yahan then rinses out his mouth, washes his hands and face, arranges his dress, the same in which he has slept all night, and recites a few pious precepts, chief among which is the morning prayer: "How great a favour has the Lord Buddha bestowed upon me in manifesting to me his law, through the observance of which I may escape hell and secure my salvation."

There are always a few sleepy boarders, or shins, who have been indulging in the dissipation of whispered conversations till far into the night, whom nothing but a personal attack will awaken, but they are soon shaken up, and then the entire community arranges itself before the image of the Buddha, the abbot at the head, the rest of the brotherhood, pyin-sins, novices, and scholars, according to their order, and all together intone the morning service. This done, they each in their ranks present themselves before the kyaung po-go, and pledge themselves to observe during the day the vows and precepts incumbent upon them. They then separate for a short time, the pupils and shins to sweep the floor of the kyaung, and bring a supply of drinking water

for the day, filter it, and place it ready for use; the more 792
advanced novices and others of full rank to sweep round the 782
sacred trees and water them; the elders to meditate in solitude on the regulations of the order. Meditation is beyond all other actions meritorious. The first meditation of the day should be on the miseries of life and the conviction that we cannot free ourselves from them; such thoughts are honourable beyond the founding of a pagoda, or praying for the salvation of all living creatures. Some gather flowers and offer them before the pagoda, to impress upon the mind the virtues of the great teacher and the weaknesses and shortcomings of human nature.

Then comes the first meal of the day, a light refection 792
usually preceded by a homily or grace, to the effect that the rice is eaten not to please the appetite, but to satisfy the wants of the body; that the yellow habit is worn not for vanity, but to cover nakedness; that they dwell in this house not for vainglory, but to be protected from the inclemency of the weather; that medicine is taken merely to recover health, and that health is desirable only that they may attend with greater diligence to prayer and meditation. After the meal all proceed to study for an hour. The ko-yins repeat what lessons they have learnt and apply themselves to new tasks. The early morning is considered especially favourable for committing to memory.

It is now close on eight o'clock, and, arranging them- 792
selves in Indian file, they set forth in orderly procession, 735
with the abbot at their head, to beg their food. Slowly they wend their way through the chief street of the town or village, halting when any one comes out to pour his contribution of rice, or fruit, or vegetables, into the alms-bowl, but never saying a word, or even raising the eyes from the ground. It is they who confer the favour, not the givers. Were it not for the passing of the mendicants, the charitable would not have the opportunity of gaining for themselves merit. Not even a glance rewards the most bounteous donation. With eyes fixed unwaveringly on the ground six feet before them, and hands clasped beneath the begging-bowl, they pass on, solemnly meditating on their own unworthiness and the vileness of all human things. There are

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naturally certain places where they receive a daily dole; but should the open-handed good wife have been delayed at the bazaar, chatting with her gossips, or the pious old head of the house be away on a journey, the recluses would rather go without breakfast than halt for a second, as if implying that they remembered the house as an ordinary place of call. It is a furlong on the noble path lost to the absentees, and the double ration of the following day is noted without a phantom of acknowledgment. So they pass round, circling back to the monastery after a perambulation lasting perhaps an hour or an hour and a half. Some mendicants, especially the more austere, return as soon as their thabeits are well filled; others apparently walk for a certain fixed time, and if the bowl is filled before this time is over, they empty it carefully on the side of the road. This is not wastry; the food is eaten by the dogs and birds of the air, and the merit to the givers is the same.

On their arrival at the monastery, a portion of all the alms they have received on the tour is solemnly offered to the Buddha, and then all proceed to breakfast. In former times, and according to the strict letter of the law, this ought to consist solely of what has been received during the morning; but a very great number of monasteries have, sad to say, fallen away from the strictness of the old rule. Only the more austere abbots enforce the observance of the earlier asceticism. Certainly in the great majority of the kyaungs of Lower Burma there is a man, not a monk, called kappiyadayaka, or supporter, who provides for them a much more delicate and better dressed meal than they would have if they ate of the miscellaneous conglomerate turned out of the alms-bowl. That indiscriminate mixture of rice, cooked and raw; peas, boiled and parched; fish, flesh, and fowl, curried and plain, usually wrapped separately in plantain leaves; cocoa-nut cakes and cucumbers; mangoes and meat; is very seldom consumed, in the larger towns at any rate, by any but the most rigidly austere. It is handed over to the little boys, the scholars of the community, or to any wanderers who may be sojourning in the kyaung, who eat as much of it as they can, and give the rest to the crows and pariah dogs. The abbot and the pyin-sin find a smoking hot

breakfast ready prepared for them when they return from 792 ●
their morning's walk, and are ready to set to with healthy 735
appetites. This question of Sybaritism is a chief source
of dispute between the rival sects of Mahā and Sula- [795]
gandi.

Breakfast done, they wash out the begging-bowls, and 792
chant a few lauds before the image of the Buddha, medi-
tating for a short time on kindness and affection. During
the succeeding hour the scholars are allowed to play about,
but must not make a noise, or indulge in quarrelsome games;
the religious pass the time in leisurely conversation, or in any
other way they please; the kyaung po-go usually has visits
from old people, who come to pay their respects, or perhaps [735]
the kyaung-tagā, the founder ~~of the~~ monastery, the patron of
his benefice, comes to consult with him on various matters,
or to converse about religion and good works. The etiquette
observed on these occasions is always very stately and cere-
monious. Whoever approaches, whether it be the poorest 792
villager, the founder of the monastery, or the governor of the 788
district, all alike must prostrate themselves three times be- 775
fore the yahan, and, with uplifted hands, say, "In order that
all the sins I have committed, in thought, in word, or in
deed, may be pardoned to me, I prostrate myself three times,
once in honour of the Buddha, again in honour of the Law,
and thirdly in honour of the Assembly, the three precious
things. By so doing, I hope to be preserved from the three
calamities, from the four states of punishment; and from the
five enemies, fire, water, thieves, governors (literally trans-
lated burdens), and malevolent people." The sayā replies:
"As a reward for his merit and his obeisances, may the
supporter (tagā) be freed from the three calamities, the four
states of punishment, the five enemies, and from harm of
what kind soever. May all his aims be good and end well;
may he advance firmly in the noble path, perfect himself in
wisdom, and finally obtain rest in ne'ban." Whenever the
visitor addresses the yahan he joins his hands together, and
sitting as he does on a mat, slightly bends the body forward, [198]
applying the title of payā, or lord, and making use of the
honorific forms of speech specially reserved for the religious.
The mendicant on his part calls the layman, of whatever

792 735 775 rank, tagā, supporter, or, if the visitor be a woman, tăgama. Somehow or other these conversations, like the addresses of the religious to the people in the rest-houses, always seem to come round to the subject of the merit of almsgiving. The recluse will say that whatever is presented, silk robe, mattress, pillow, betel-box, is purified by the merit of the alms deed. The poor could fill the Lord Buddha's begging-bowl with a handful of flowers; the rich could not do so with a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand measures of grain. The path in the noontide heat is hard to one who has no sandals, and no water-gourd. What, then, will be the path after death to one who has not charity and regard for the ten precepts! Alms deeds can defend a man and protect him against the influence and the sources of demerits which are man's true enemies. Liberality is chief among the ten great virtues; it is the second of the three works of perfection; it is the absolute soul of the five renouncements. With all these a man becomes a Buddha, without them he sinks to be an animal, or worse still, to the fiery chambers of hell.

792 788 When the conversation is over the layman bows down three times again, saying, "My Lord's disciple does obeisance"; or U tin ba thi "places his forehead on the ground," rises, backs five or ten paces, and then turning on the right, as he would at the pagoda, departs. There may be quite a long succession of these visitors, and their respects are paid all through the afternoon, if the weather be not too hot.

At half-past eleven, however, there is another meal, usually a light refection of fruits, and this is the last of the day. The pyin-sin are expressly forbidden to eat after noon. Solid food taken after the shadows slope to the east endangers purity. The blood becomes heated, and, moreover, when the stomach is loaded the mind becomes overclouded and unfitted for meditation. It is worthy of remark that the religious must eat, as they walk, slowly and with gravity, only putting moderate-sized morsels into the mouth, and constantly bearing in mind that food is not intended for the gratification of the flesh, but for the nourishment of the body. The ceremony called a-kat must also be care-

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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fully observed, in accordance with the precise instructions laid down in the Wini. When a monk wants anything he must not go and get it for himself, nor direct any one in as many words to bring it to him. He must say to an attendant shin, or scholar, "Do what is lawful," whereupon the food is brought him, and the shin kneels down at a distance of a couple of feet, and, making the customary salutation, says, "This is lawful." The yahan then either takes it from his hand or directs him to place it within reach. The same ceremony is observed in everything, whether the religious wants water to wash his face or hands or to rinse out his mouth, or his sandals and fan when he goes out, or when offerings are made to him by the pious. The desire is of course to impart dignity to all the monk does, and to repress covetousness and inordinate carnal desires, and the custom dates from the very foundation of the order. 792 788

After the noontide meal all return to work again. A certain number undertake the teaching of the boys, who are at all stages of learning, from the children at the Thin-bôn-gyi, the spelling-book, up to the Ko-yins, who, in accordance with the law, are learning the Wini, the Whole Duty of the Monk, by heart, with a view to abandoning the world and adopting the religious life. Others set to work to read old texts and the commentaries on them, or go to superintend the professional writers who are copying out manuscripts, carefully scratching on the palm-leaves with sharp steel style. The pyin-sin themselves never do anything of the kind. The writers are all professionals, laymen, and almost without exception from Upper Burma. The sădaik, the carved and gilded box containing the palm-leaf books, stands in the central room near the images, and often shaded by a sacred umbrella. When a learned sadaw makes notes, or writes a commentary of his own, he dictates it all to these copyists, who afterwards engross it. Most of the older members of the kyaung do, however, what an Englishman would call nothing, all the afternoon. They talk with whatever idlers—and there are always an abundance of them—come about the place, and then sink into meditation and many of the weaker of them into sleep. Meditation is the only path to the higher seats whereby a 792 212 [871] 000

781 789 Meditation is the only path to the higher seats whereby a man becomes a yahanda, fit for Ne'ban, possessed of the six kinds of wisdom:—

1. The faculty of seeing like a nat or dewa.
2. The faculty of hearing like a nat.
3. Creative power.
4. Knowledge of the thoughts of others.
5. Freedom from passion.
6. Knowledge of one's own past existences.

781 788 [824] They sit therefore for long hours fingering their rosaries, the beads made of the seeds of the *Canna indica*, "Indian shot," which sprang from Shin Gautama's blood, and repeating many times the prescribed formulæ, most often the Thamatawi Patthana—All is changeful, all is sad, all is unreal; followed by the Tharana Gôn, the invocation of the Three Precious Gems, the Lord, the Law, and the Assembly. So by abstraction of the mind they hope to acquire the four laws of Edepat:—

1. Absolute power over the will.
2. Absolute power over the mind.
3. Absolute power of execution.
4. Absolute power over the means to the object.

781 812 The discipline is terrible to all but a slow-minded man, and we can well imagine one who thus presents himself to the people as a living memento of all that is sacred and perfect in the religion, longing for the extinction of Ne'ban, where he may escape from the misery of recurring lives.

> Ask of the sick, the mourners, ask of him
> Who tottereth on his staff, lone and forlorn,
> Liketh thee life? These say, The babe is wise
> That weepeth being born.

● 792 So each one in the brotherhood passes the time each afternoon: some asleep, some racking the brain with mystical musings, some learning, some teaching, while throughout all sounds the din of the schoolroom, where the pupils are shouting out their tasks at the top of their voices.

Between three and four the lessons are finished, and the shins and scholars perform any domestic duties that may be

required about the monastery. This done, the day-scholars 792
go home and have their dinner, a few of the boarders perhaps
gaining permission to do the same. The ko-yins, being
under monastic discipline, are obliged to fast like their
superiors. Most of them, and some few of the pon-gyis,
go out for a staid and solemn walk round the village and
out to the pagoda. Then, at sunset, the unmelodious, far-
reaching notes of the kaladet summon all back to the kyaung.
The strollers return immediately. None wearing the yellow [805]
robe may be without the monastery limits after the sun goes
down, which occurs throughout the whole year close upon
six o'clock. A short time afterwards the scholars are summoned 788
before the abbot or some of the pon-gyis and recite 792
steadily all that they have learned, from the Thin-bôn-gyi 779
up to the book they have last committed to memory. If the
kyaung is large and there are a number of students, this
thorough process is, however, modified, and only the work at
the moment being learned is required of the pupils. The
Pali rituals are chanted with spasmodic energy, abundance
of sound in most cases doing duty for a just comprehension
of the matter. Very few of the religious could string a
sentence together in Pali, far less speak the language, yet
most of them can pour forth homilies and dogmata for hours
on end, so that the poor ko-yins are not to be scoffed at for
their parrot-like volubility. When this examination is over,
if the sayā is an enthusiast, or if there is time, that dignitary
himself delivers a sermon, or gives an exposition of some
knotty passage, or perhaps there is a general conversation on
some question of doctrine, or other subject of ecclesiastical
interest at the moment.

Thus the time passes away till half-past eight or nine, 792
when the evening is closed with devotions in the presence of 788
the image of the Buddha. All assemble according to their
rank as in the morning, and together intone the vesper lauds.
When the last sounds of the mournful chant have died away
in the dimly-lighted chamber, one of the novices, or a clever
scholar, stands up, and with a loud voice proclaims the hour, [805]
the day of the week, the day of the month, and the number
of the year. Then all shikho before the Buddha thrice,
and thrice before the abbot, and retire to rest. None who

● 792 have experienced the impressiveness of this ceremonial, called
788 the Thā-thanā-hlyauk, will readily forget the powerful effect it has on the feelings. It is the fit ending of a day full of great possibilities for all. If the same routine gone through day after day becomes monotonous and loses some of its power for good, yet the effect of such a school, presided over by an abbot of intelligence and earnestness, must infallibly work for the good of all connected with it, and especially so in the case of an impulsive, impressionable
792 people like the Burmese. As long as all the men of the
871 country pass through the kyaungs, the teachings of Western missionaries can have but little power to shake the power of Buddhism over the people. The moral truths of both religions, Christianity and Buddhism, are practically the same, and who can give proof of aught else without calling in the aid of faith? The Burman is convinced that no other creed will suit him so well, and the number of monasteries in all parts of the country renders it easy for every one to obtain entrance for his children. The king sent his sons to the kyaung, and the poorest and most sinful wretch need not fear that his child will be turned away from the gates. Teaching is really all the pyin-sin do for the people; but it is precisely this moderate amount of teaching, revealing as it does to all the stern simplicity of the monastic life, that keeps the faith active in the country. Many monks are supremely lazy, but so are many of their fellow-countrymen, and if you are bidden by the Law to meditate deeply on the nature of mind and matter, of Nām and Rupa, of Seit and Sedathit, of Thissa and Zan, it is certain that you cannot be actively employed on other less important matters.

Of late years the rudiments of Western knowledge, arithmetic, elementary geography, and history are more and more taught in the monasteries all over the country, and Government gives grants to the monasteries for the pupils who pass the prescribed examinations.

leapt enormous heights in the air, jumped about and ran at 304 754
random, carried with the utmost ease things which no one
else could move. The abbot locked him up in a sadaik, the
box in which the palm-leaf manuscripts were kept; he got
out without injuring the lock in any way, sprang on to
the roof of the monastery, forty feet high, and turned a
somersault to the ground without hurting himself in the
least. He had been a boy of very soft, easy temper, and
now he became fiery and uncertain, and with his vast
strength, very dangerous. He only calmed down when a
monk preached the law to him. He was constantly doing
marvellous things; one day he walked across the river in
front of the monastery, holding a monk's ôk, or food vessel,
in his hands. The depth of the water was over six fathoms,
but it did not reach higher than his waist. On another
occasion a tree which was being cut down fell on him. He
sank into the ground and came forth quite uninjured.
After some years his parents took him to Magwe in Upper
Burma. There he fell into bad courses and became a
dacoit. This was terrible for his family in a special way,
because in native territory if they cannot catch the dacoit [681]
they seize all his friends and relations and put them in jail
till they can get hold of the real culprit, and no one can lay
hands on a Baw-di-tha-da. At last, however, he was restored
to his right mind. A holy ascetic came across him, soothed
him with the payeit gyi, and then with a rusty nail and [792]
sacred medicines, tattooed out the figure put on with such
lamentable results by the Shan sayā. The quondam Baw-di-tha-da
is now a staid and respected broker in the employ
of one of the best-known English rice firms in Rangoon.
He was fortunate; most Baw-di-tha-das have to be killed
in their sleep.

But though Baw-di-tha-das are very rare, charmed tattooing 304
is not, and there are some fast young men who seem 751
almost to make picture galleries of themselves with emblems
and patterns all over their chests, arms, backs, and the
calves of their legs. The colour gradually dies away until
at last nothing remains but the blue breeches. These really
look well, and they last a man to his dying day.

The following recipes and formulæ to be repeated

The monks are perhaps
276 the most persistent chewers of the good betel. Smoking is
● 792 prohibited, but nothing is said against betel, and it is considered a great stimulator of the meditative faculties. The
lime used very speedily corrodes and destroys the teeth, and
then the old pôngyi has to make the scholars crush up the
nuts so that they may not hurt his toothless gums. It is a
common belief that no one can speak Burmese well till he
chews betel. Demosthenes is said to have put pebbles in
his mouth when he was practising oratory.

Alternate smoking, chewing, and conversation serve to
517 pass the day, and after dinner, when the sun goes down, our
515 villager has a bath down by the well to freshen him up.
302 The water is drawn up in a bucket and simply poured over
the body. Soap is never used, and particular care is taken
not to wet the hair. The head washing is a special ceremony,
to be gone through only occasionally, and then with circumspection. Dandies, as a rule, put a solution of rice
and water on their hair every day to make it grow long, and
cocoanut oil is also very generally used. Both sexes are
— proud of the length of their hair, and it is not uncommon to
see it reaching below the knee and down to the ankles.
The men wear it in a yaung or knot on the top of the head,
while the sadôn of the women is at the back of the head.
Both men and women are in the habit of adding to its size
by interweaving false tresses, which are easily got, seeing
that everybody has black hair, and that some young member
of the family is constantly getting his locks cut off on his
entry into the monastery. There is no more sense of shame
in using false hair than there is in improving the appearance
[751] by wearing fine clothes. At his bath it is usual for a pious
person to repeat a Pali charm over the first bucket of water,
which is then slowly poured over the body. The object of
this is to guard against sickness.

517 After bathing, the Burman, if he is young, usually puts
514 on his fine clothes, for except in the rainy season there is
291 sure to be a dramatic performance, or a yein dance by the
village lads and lasses, or an entertainment of some kind
going on at some house in the village. The dress is very
simple and picturesque. The paso is a long silk cloth,
fifteen cubits long and about two and a half wide. It is

CHAPTER XII

THE NOBLE ORDER OF THE YELLOW ROBE

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That noble order of the yellow robe
Which to this day standeth to help the world.

ALL living creatures are plodding on
the noble Eightfold Path which brings to peace;
By lower or by upper heights it goes,
The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All
Will reach the sun-lit snows.

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The monks in Lower Burma are fond of the comparison which steam lends them now. The holy fraternity are pushing on by mail train to the emancipation from constant successions of new births, while the weary layman toils along the dusty road on foot, or at best in a jolting bullock-cart; the mendicant pushes up the stream of life in a huge throbbing paddle steamer; the man yet in the world struggles along painfully against the current, and whirled about by eddies in a rude canoe. Why, then, cannot all set forth on the path alike? Partly because of ignorance and its consequences; partly because of the kan which forms each man's life:

The books say well, my Brothers! each man's life
The outcome of his former living is,
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss.

A man's kan may be sufficient to gain him existence as a human being, but not enough to sustain him in the noble life of the monk. He may enter the noble order, he must, indeed, if he would be other than a brute beast; but his kan, the sum of actions that make up his life, the soul of

● 792 transmigrations, forces him to leave and enter the forest of
775 the world, some from want of the gift of continence, some
from ambition and desire for worldly power, some from a
seeking after wealth, all from the predominance of some one
of the hundred and twenty seit that incapacitate a man for
779 the calm meditative life of the pyin-sin.

792 In the Lord Buddha's time, when a man adopted the faith, the requisites were belief in his teaching, a willingness to live in poverty and chastity, and under strict rules. All the applicant had to do was to renounce the ordinary pursuits of life, give up all his goods, take the vows, and he was forthwith a member of the Thengā. From that time forward he lived in poverty, was dependent upon alms for his food, and upon charity for a shelter for his head; he was a beikku, a mendicant, and only those who were such were Buddhists. But as the believers increased, it was evident that all could not wholly adopt the religious life. Many had faith, but not faith enough to support them in the strict rule of the society, and soon Buddhists became divided into the two classes of laymen who adopted and believed in the religious tenets, and the religious who abandoned the world entirely, and strove only to lead the higher life. Hence also arose the hierarchy of the order, which exists to a certain extent in Burma, though very far from approaching the completeness of the system of Thibet, where there is a pontifical court, an elective sacerdotal chief, and a college of superior Lamas. In this respect, however, Burman Buddhism is as much closer to the primitive order in polity as it is in exact observance of the ordinations of the Wini. Theoretically, in the sacred assembly there are but three classes:

792 The shin, the novice, who has put on the yellow robe without becoming a professed member of the order, and probably with no other desire than that of obtaining his "humanity." These are called ko-yins, maung-shins, and a variety of other names.

The u-pyin-sin, those who, having lived a certain time in the monastery, have been formally admitted to the assembly with a prescribed ceremony, whereby the title of yahan is solemnly conferred. These are the pyit-shin, or religious.

Finally, there is the pôngyi, the "Great Glory," who by virtue of prolonged stay—ten years is the minimum—has proved his steadfastness and unflinching self-denial.

This division of the fraternity is not far removed from the classification of Shin Gautama's own time, when all people were regarded and addressed as dāyaka, laymen, who hear the preaching of the law, but are not yet converted to a firm acceptance of it; or upathaka, not merely hearers of the law, but steadfast believers and practisers of its precepts. Nowadays the term dāyaka is applicable to all mankind, for it is open to all to seek for refuge in the Law of Good.

Practically, however, there is a slightly extended distinction of rank.

1. The Shin, the postulant.

2. The Pyit-shin, the religious, the full member of the order.

3. The Sayā, always a pôngyi, the head of each kyaung, or religious house, who controls all the inmates.

4. The Gaing-ôk, the provincial, who has a jurisdiction extending over all the monasteries of a cluster of villages or over a whole district, giving advice in all the affairs of these communities, enforcing the rules against malcontents, and correcting any abuses.

5. The Sadaw, a royal teacher, or vicar-general of the order, who manages the entire affairs of the whole country, both Burma and the Shan States, in religious matters. These live in or near Mandalay, and are summoned thither on their appointment. There are ordinarily eight of them, all honoured with the title of Tha-thana-paing, *i.e.* supreme in matters appertaining to religion. It is a mistake to speak of *the* Tha-thana-paing as a sort of Burmese Buddhist pope. There is no such approximation to the heterodox Buddhism of Thibet, unless indeed the other sadaw-gyis have died, and there is but one remaining. Since the annexation of Upper Burma, the British Government has allowed the election of a single Tha-thana-paing and given letters patent to the monk chosen.

In the time of native rule the teacher of the reigning king was always created a Sadaw, if indeed he had not been one before he was called upon to take a royal pupil. The

792 respect paid to him by the king was paid, not as to the head
554 of the religion, but as to the personal teacher. The Burman
779 in his prayers, or rather his meditations for the good of others, prays for his teacher before his parents. The five pleasant things in the world are: the shade of trees, the shade of parents, the shade of teachers, the shade of princes, the shade of the Buddha.

It is this republican tendency of Buddhism that gives it such a wonderful hold on the people. Rank does not confer on the mendicant greater honour, or release him from any of his obligations. The most learned and famous Sadaw must go forth every morning to beg his daily food. If he is very aged and decrepit he may be excused to some extent, but every now and again he must totter forth to preserve the letter of the law and show a proper example of humility. His dress is the same as that of the most recently admitted ko-yin, and in the eyes of the world he holds honour, not because he controls the affairs of the assembly, but because he is so close to the verge of Ne'ban. This feeling extends beyond the order into ordinary life. The religion brings all men down to the same level. The poor man may be a king of nats in the next life; the wealthy sinner may frizzle in the awful pains of hell. There is no difference between man and man but that which is established by superiority in virtue;
[562] and hence it is that the state of women among Buddhists is so very much higher than it is among Oriental peoples, who do not hold by that faith. The Burmese woman enjoys many rights which her European sister is even now clamouring for.

792 We have seen that the whole male population of Burma
771 enters the monastery, and that the great majority leave after a very short stay. Some, however, grow fond of the monastic ways, and remain to study and qualify themselves to be mendicants. In becoming pyin-sin they do not acquire any new spiritual power, nor do they constitute themselves directly teachers of the people. In a religious system, which acknowledges no supreme Deity, it is impossible for any one to intercede with a Creator whose existence is denied, in behalf of a man who can only attain to a higher state by his own pious life and earnest self-denial. The

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religious are merely initiated into a higher stage, and become members of an order in which every individual is aiming at a greater degree of sanctity. The doors of the kyaung are always open as well to those who wish to enter as to those who wish to leave it. The longest stayer has the greatest honour. A visitor monk, who has the greater number of wās, who has passed many lenten seasons in his yellow robe, will be shikho'd to, will receive the homage of the head of the monastery, even if he be a gaing-ôk, and the stranger but a simple pôngyi.

In his ordination, therefore, the pyin-sin takes upon himself no burden in the shape of a cure of souls. He is not a priest like the Christian minister, who undertakes to guide others to salvation. He has no trouble for his food; a pious and kindly population supplies him far beyond his requirements, and expects no service in return for this support. He has no sermons to prepare; it is not expected that he will preach the law, and when of his own accord he occasionally does give an exposition, it is not any feeble excogitation of his own, but the thoughts and words of the Great Master himself, or of the highest and noblest of the men of old, that he delivers. His natural rest is never broken in upon by calls to administer consolation and comfort to the sick and the dying. Even his leisure is seldom interrupted to be present at the last rites for the dead. He is not a minister of religion, and all he has to do is to seek his own deliverance and salvation. All that is compulsory on him is the observance of continence, poverty, and humility, with tenderness to all living things, abstraction from the world, and a strict observance of a number of moral precepts, all tending to inculcate these things. It is curious perhaps, therefore, that greater numbers do not don the yellow robe. As it is, however, there is no lack of them.

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Previous to admission the postulant must have reached the age of twenty years and have obtained his parents' permission. The origin of this stipulation dates from the earliest times. When Gautama attained the Buddhaship his half-brother Nanda was next heir, and was about to be proclaimed Crown Prince when he was persuaded to become yahan. Thereupon Thudaw-dana, the king, obtained a

● 792 561 promise from the Buddha that ever after none should put on the celibate robe without his parents' consent. The candidate must also give proof of a sufficient knowledge of the Pareit-gyi, the Padiseit, the three Bitaghats, and the like. When it is understood that he has given satisfaction in these subjects, his friends provide for him the complete equipment of a mendicant, the sacred eight utensils which a pyin-sin cannot do without. These are:—

[292] 1. The dugôt, a piece of yellow cloth of rectangular shape, folded many times and worn over the left shoulder, with the ends hanging down behind and before.

2. The kowut, a piece of cloth worn round the loins and reaching to the ankles.

3. The thinbaing, a square-shaped cloth, yellow like the others, thrown cloak-fashion over the chest and shoulders, and coming down as far as the knees.

[293] 4. The thabeit, or begging-pot, worn suspended round the neck by a cord. It is shaped like a large circular soup-tureen with a rounded bottom, and has no lid. This must be carried round every morning to receive the alms of the pious.

5. The kaban, a leathern girdle used for binding on the kowut.

6. The pekot, a short-handled axe used for splitting firewood and the like.

7. An at, or needle.

8. A yesit, a strainer, or water dipper, an apparatus for filtering the water which he drinks, so that he may not, even unwittingly, take animal life.

To these pareik-kaya shit-ba, these sacred eight utensils, is usually added an awana or yap, a lotus-leaf-shaped fan, made from a single palm frond, with an edging of bamboo or light wood, and furnished with a handle fashioned like the letter S. The leaf used is that of the Talapat palm, hence the name of Talapoins given to the members of the brotherhood by the early Portuguese adventurers in Burma. Every mendicant must have this fan with him when he goes to an assemblage where there are likely to be women present, in order that he may be thus able to shut himself off from any temptation to carnal thoughts. The sight of half a

● 792 [293] dozen or more solemn-visaged monks sitting on their mats and coyly hiding their faces behind these big fans is apt to raise a smile on the face of a foreigner. But there is no doubt that the regulation is well advised. Women are disturbers of tranquil meditation.

792 346 561 When these necessaries have been provided, the candidate proceeds to the appointed building. This is always a thein, a consecrated hall, built of teak, with open sides and the sacred three, five, or seven overlapping and diminishing roofs, not unlike the Albert Memorial in appearance, but much larger at the base. Here the examining body is assembled to the number of ten or twelve, ordinarily, but a minimum of four will suffice if the ceremony is conducted in the jungle. The senior is appointed upyitsi, or president, and a secretary is nominated, whose duty it is to bring forward the candidate and to read the Kammawāsā, the ritual of 779 212 531 ordination. This is the most gorgeously ornamented of all the Burmese books. It is written, not in the ordinary round character, but in square letters painted on with a thick black resinous gum, and requires a special education to read it. The leaves are formed either of the ordinary palm-leaf, thickly covered with red lacquer, and profusely ornamented round the border and between the lines with gilded figures of nats and elaborate scroll-work, or in the case of the more sacred monasteries, of the discarded waistcloths of kings. None might wear these pasos after the Great King of Righteousness had tired of them, and many were therefore made use of for this purpose. Portions of them are taken, doubled over, and then covered with numerous coatings of wood-oil and a paste composed of this same thitsi, with finely sifted burnt rice-husks, sawdust, and rice-water, until at last they become firm as a piece of cardboard, but vastly more pliant. Then the sheets are emblazoned, and the text painted on, the whole being enclosed between richly ornamented teak boards. Few more splendid-looking manuscripts can be seen anywhere. Occasionally copies are found engrossed on thin sheets of ivory or copper, but those on the royal pasos, [195] called Wut-lè Kammawāsās, are most highly esteemed. The text is always read in a peculiar way, in a high-pitched, jerky recitative, which is not without a certain impressive effect.

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The following detailed account of the ceremony of initiation is taken from the second volume of Bishop Bigandet's *Life of Gautama*, the bulk of it being a translation of the Kammawāsā:—

As soon as the pyin-sin have taken their places, the Kammawā-sayā (the secretary) introduces the novitiant duly clothed and bearing the necessary utensils. The candidate kneels down, and, with his hands raised to his forehead and his body bent, repeats three times:

"Venerable president, I acknowledge you to be my upyitsi."

The assistant, addressing himself to the candidate, says:

"Dost thou acknowledge this to be thy father, and these thy sacred vestments?"

The candidate audibly answers "Yes," and then withdraws to a distance of twelve cubits from the assembled fathers, whom the Kammawā-sayā addresses as follows:

"Venerable upyitsi, and you, brethren, here assembled, listen to my words. The candidate who now stands in a humble posture before you solicits from the upyitsi the favour of being honoured with the dignity of pyin-sin. If it appears to you that everything is properly arranged and disposed for this purpose, I will duly admonish him."

Then turning to the candidate he says:

"O candidate, be attentive to my words, and beware lest on this solemn occasion thou utterest an untruth, or concealest aught from our knowledge. Learn that there are certain incapacities and defects which render a person unfit for admission into our order. Moreover, when before the assembly thou art interrogated respecting such defects, thou art to answer truly and declare what incapacities thou mayest labour under. Now this is not the time to remain silent and decline thy head; every member of the assembly has a right to interrogate thee at his pleasure, and it is thy bounden duty to return an answer to all his questions.

"Candidate! Art thou affected with leprosy or any such odious malady? Hast thou scrofula or any similar complaint? Dost thou suffer from asthma or cough? Art thou affected with those complaints which arise from a

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corrupted blood? Art thou afflicted by madness or other ills caused by giants, witches, or the evil spirits of the forests or mountains?"

To each question the candidate answers—

"From such complaints and bodily disorders I am free."

The examination continues:

"Art thou a man?"

"I am."

"Art thou a true and legitimate son?"

"I am."

"Art thou involved in debts?"

"I am not."

"Art thou the bondman and underling of some great man?"

"I am not."

"Have thy parents given their consent to thy ordination?"

"They have."

"Hast thou reached the age of twenty years?"

"I have."

"Are thy vestments and sacred begging-bowl prepared?"

"They are."

"Candidate, what is thy name?"

"Wago (a vile and unworthy being)."

"What is the name of thy master?"

"His name is upyitsi."

The assistant then turns to the assembled yahans and says:

"Venerable upyitsi, and ye assembled brethren, be pleased to listen to my words. I have duly admonished this candidate who seeks from you admission to our order. Does the present moment appear to you a meet and a fit one for his admission? If so, I will order him to approach."

The fathers remaining silent, the assistant instructs the postulant to go close to the assembly and to ask that he may be received. The candidate approaches the assembly, and sitting before them in a respectful attitude, resting on his heels, raises his joined hands and says three times, "I beg, O fathers of this assembly, to be admitted as yahan. Have pity on me, take me from my present state of a layman, which is one of sin and imperfection, advance me to that of yahan, which is one of virtue and perfection."

792 561 The assistant then addresses the council and says:

"O ye fathers here assembled, hear my words. This candidate, humbly prostrated before you, begs of the upyitsi to be admitted among us; he is free from all defects, corporeal infirmities, and mental incapacities that would otherwise debar him from entering our holy state; he is provided with the patta and holy vestments, and he has duly asked the assembly in the name of the upyitsi for permission to be admitted. Now, therefore, let the assembled fathers complete his ordination. To whomsoever this seems good let him keep silence; whosoever thinks otherwise, let him declare that the candidate is unworthy of admission."

This he repeats thrice, and then continues:

"Since then none of the fathers object, but all are silent, which is a sign that all have consented, so therefore let it be done. Let this candidate pass out of the state of sin and imperfection into the perfect state of a yahan, and thus, by the consent of the upyitsi and all the fathers, let him be received."

The fathers must note down under what shade, on what day, at what hour, and in what season the candidate has been received.

The reader of the Kammawā, addressing the candidate, continues:

792 "Let the candidate attend to the following account of the duties which are incumbent upon him, and to the faults which he must carefully avoid:—

"It is the duty of each member of our brotherhood to beg for his food with labour and with the exertion of the muscles of his feet, and through the whole course of his life he must gain his subsistence by the labour of his feet (he must not work with his hands, nor beg with his tongue). He is allowed to make use of all things that are offered to him in particular, or to the society in general, that are usually presented in banquets, that are sent by letter, and that are given on the new and full moon and at festivals. O candidate, all these things you may use for your food."

Candidate. "Sir, I understand what you tell me."

"It is a part of the duty of a member of our society to wear, through humility, yellow clothes made of rags thrown

792 about in the streets or among the tombs. If, however, by his talent and virtue, one procures for himself many benefactors, he may receive from them for his habit the following articles, namely, cotton and silk, or cloth of red (of a Thibetan origin) or yellow wool." [342]

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

"Every member of the society must dwell in a house built under the shade of lofty trees. But if, owing to your zeal and virtue, you procure for yourself many benefactors who are willing to build for you a better habitation, you may dwell in it. The dwelling may be made of bamboo, wood, or bricks, with roofs adorned with spires of pyramidal or triangular form."

Candidate. "I will duly attend to these instructions."

"It is incumbent upon an elect to use as medicine the urine of a cow or of a black bullock, whereon lime and the juice of a lemon or other sour fruit has been poured. He may also use as medicines articles thrown out of markets, or picked up at the corners of streets. He may accept for medicinal purposes nutmegs or cloves. The following articles also may be used medicinally—butter, cream, and honey."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

The newly initiated yahan is now warned against the four sins, the commission of any one of which would entail the loss of the dignity he has just attained.

792 The Kammawā-sayā goes on: "Elect, being now admitted into our society, it is no longer lawful for you to indulge in carnal pleasures, whether with yourself or with animals. He who is guilty of such a sin can no longer be numbered among the perfect. Sooner shall the severed head be joined again to the neck, and life restored to the breathless body, than a pyin-sin who has committed fornication recover his lost sanctity. Beware therefore lest you pollute yourself with such a crime."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

"Again, it is unlawful and forbidden for an elect to take things that belong to another, or even to covet them, although their value should not exceed a quarter of a tical (about six annas). Whoever sins even to that small amount is thereby

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deprived of his sacred character, and can no more be restored to his pristine state than the branch cut from the tree can retain its luxuriant foliage and put forth buds. Beware of theft during the whole of your mortal journey."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

"Again, an elect can never knowingly deprive any living being of life, or wish the death of any one, however troublesome he may prove. Sooner shall the cleft rock reunite so as to make a whole, than he who kills any being be readmitted into the society. Cautiously avoid so heinous a crime."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

"Again, no member of our brotherhood can ever arrogate to himself extraordinary gifts or supernatural perfections, or through vainglory give himself out as a holy man; such, for instance, as to withdraw into solitary places, or on pretence of enjoying ecstasies like the ariya, afterwards presume to teach others the way to uncommon spiritual attainments. Sooner the lofty palm-tree that has been cut down can become green again, than an elect guilty of such pride be restored to his holy station. Take care that you do not give way to such an excess."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

(The pyin-sin who commits any one of these last four sins is *ipso facto* excluded from the society. Nothing can palliate them. Other sins may be atoned for by penance and repentance, but one who has committed any one of these crimes may indeed, if undetected, remain a member of the order, but inwardly he no longer belongs to it. He has become a living lie.)

These denunciations end the ceremony. The newly made yahan falls in with the rest, and on the rising of the council proceeds, in company with them, to his own monastery. It is thus clearly seen that the mendicant receives no spiritual powers whatever. He simply becomes a member of a holy society that he himself may observe the laws of the Master more perfectly. He has nothing to do with guiding his fellow-monks or the laity. The latter indeed may gain for themselves easy merit by pressing alms upon him, but that can hardly be said to be a merit in the pyin-sin.

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They may also go and consult him, and he will read portions of the Law, and explain them as far as his learning permits. He occasionally reads the Law aloud in a rest-house near the pagoda on a feast day; goes to a funeral, that the pious may have an opportunity of giving him presents, and so laying up a good store towards the kan of a future existence. But it is the teaching of the youth of the country that is his chief credit, and it is this that binds the country to the support of the monastic system.

Sometimes after the ritual of the Kammawā has been gone through, the sponsor of the elected pyin-sin stands up and reads a selection from the full rule of the order, which contains 227 precepts. This is called the Patimauk, or Book of the Enfranchisement, and its composition is attributed to the Lord Buddha himself; but it is much more probably, indeed certainly, like the Kammawāsā, the slow growth and production of a long series of observant apostles. Every possible action of the pyin-sin during the day is anticipated, and the precise way in which it should be performed carefully set forth. The sins he may commit are divided under seven main heads, of which the first, called Parazikan, comprises the four cardinal sins mentioned above. The others may be atoned for by confession to the kyaung-pogo or sayā, who appoints a penance or not as he thinks fit. The punishments are not severe in character, and are usually to water the sacred trees, to sweep out the rooms, to walk for a stated time in the heat of the sun, to carry a number of baskets of earth from one place to another, to sleep without a pillow, or to keep a vigil by night in a churchyard. But a series of infractions of the law would meet with very severe treatment, if not from the heads of the monastery, then from the mass of the people outside. If a pyin-sin committed any one of the four cardinal sins, he would most assuredly be unfrocked and turned out of the monastery doors to the mercy of the people, and they would certainly stone him, and perhaps even put him to death. Such lapses, and even the commission of more venial offences, are very rare, for the weak-minded yahan is always free to turn layman whenever he chooses, without consulting any one but himself and his frailties.

792 564 [789] The ceremony of excommunication, thabeit hmauk (literally, inverting the alms-bowl), is sufficiently solemn. The monks gather in a circle round the culprit, and the latter part of the Kammawā, that which is read to drive sickness and evil spirits out of a town, is gravely recited by the abbot, the surrounding brethren responding at the end of each sentence. When it is finished, his yellow-robes are taken off him, his alms-bowl is turned mouth downwards, and he is hurried out of the monastery limits. His condition is pitiable. No one may speak to him; no monk will take alms from him; he can neither buy nor sell; he is not allowed even to draw water from a well, or drink from the jars at a wayside zayat. He is as much an outcast as any pagoda slave, and grievous is the penance he must go through before he is once more received into the society even of laymen. It occasionally happens when there is much evil living in a district, or if the people are lax in their religious observances, that the brethren of the kyaung put the neighbourhood under a ban by inverting their alms-bowls, and refusing to go out begging. There is no greater proof of the power of the assembly than the rapidity with which this effects its purpose. The most careless are brought to a sense of their sinfulness in a few days. Such excommunication is, however, more and more rare.

792 551 Before the death of the Lord Buddha, the yahans all addressed one another as awutthaw; but after he had attained the ne'ban of khan-das under the eng-gyin-bin (*Shorea robusta*), a recognition of relative rank was instituted. The inferiors, we are told, called the more advanced in the order, bante, while the juniors were addressed in their turn, by their proper name, or that of their family. In Burma, however, this regulation prevails only to a very slight extent. With the mendicants, as with the royalty, and indeed with the populace at large, it is considered uncivil to mention a person's name in conversation, and his rank, or the kyaung he belongs to, is used instead, or perhaps only the designation of his sacred profession. The laity indiscriminately address all wearers of the yellow robe as payā (lord).

792 Similarly the "punishment of Brahma," recommended by the great master to be employed against weaker brethren, is

little used. This punishment was calculated to isolate the offending brother. The other yahans were to avoid speaking to him, to the extent of not even uttering a rebuke, if he indulged in indiscreet talk. Nowadays, when one pyin-sin is irritated with another, he does not indeed talk to him, or go and abuse him, but he advises the people to have nothing to do with him, and give him no alms. 792

Indeed many laxities have crept in. Some casuists evade the rule against touching gold and silver. It is becoming lamentably common for monks, otherwise eminently pious and worthy of respect, not only not to refuse money, but actually to receive it with their own hands—covered with a handkerchief. Such unprincipled playing with the letter of the law is vehemently denounced by the Sulagandi, and disliked by the more earnest laymen, even when the pyin-sin does not personally shave so close to the wind, but bids one of his schoolboys take the coin and put it in the box. Of a piece with this is the roundabout way of getting anything the monk may especially desire. He may not directly ask for anything, if it were even food to save him from starvation, far less must he bargain for the object he wishes. Therefore an elaborate method of exchange has been invented by a yahan in whom the passion of covetousness was far from being extinguished. He says, such and such a thing "is useless to me; but what is the value of that? I have begging-bowls, iron, clay, and lacquer in abundance, but my robe is sadly worn and discoloured. That thengan is seemly and suitable for a holy man. Thrice blessed is he that giveth alms, his merit will wax great." Very often he thus gets the thing he wants without having to part with previous alms-gifts. Others, perhaps, a little more scrupulous, mention to the kappiyadāyaka, the manciple of the kyaung, that they would be glad to have such and such a thing, and he provides it out of the monastic funds. All this trifling with the spirit of the patimauk is, however, strenuously denounced by the Sulagandi, who in Lower Burma have gathered a large proportion of the more right-hinking of the laity to their side. 792 178

Some of the regulations of the Book of the Enfranchise- ent are very singular, but all may be traced to some one 792

792 of the fundamental precepts, and are not so ludicrous as some
unbelievers would make out, except for the fact that they
are set down so precisely when they might have been left to
the imagination.

A monk must not build a monastery for himself without
the aid of a benefactor. If his piety and talents are not
such as to induce a layman to build a kyaung for him, let
him patiently remain in the house into which he was
792 ordained. He must see that the foundations of a monastery
779 are not laid in a place where there are many insects or
worms, which would thus be killed.

For a similar reason he must not dig himself, except in
a sandy place, where there can be no animal life. Neither
must he spit, nor do anything of that kind on green grass,
nor in fresh water, nor is he allowed to climb trees. There
was a discussion in the Lord Buddha's time as to whether
vegetation could be regarded as anywhere in the ladder of
existence. Shin Gautama, on being asked, said it could not.
Still trees and grass must not be destroyed, for they support
792 life in other creatures. A yahan may not drive in a carriage
or ride a pony. He must not travel in the same boat or
remain under the same roof with a woman, or even with a
female animal. When he walks abroad he must neither
walk fast nor dawdle and lounge about the streets. He must
allow no woman to wash or clean his robes, nor eat food
cooked by female hands, if he can get any other; if a woman
offers rice in her hand, he may take but not eat it. He must
not look into a brother's thabeit, as suggesting that he does
not receive much alms. He must not eat his food to the
last mouthful, and must avoid highly-seasoned dishes as
tending to heat the blood.

792 In return for their self-denial the pyin-sin are bountifully
554 honoured by the people, from the sovereign on the throne,
who vacates his seat for the thā-thanā-baing, to the beggar
in the street who prostrates himself in the dust when the
yahan passes by. In the country villages all make obeisance
when the mendicant passes, and the women kneel down on
each side of the road. Such outward marks of respect are
[369] not usual in the larger towns, but there is no lack of veneration, and all make way for the monk when he walks abroad.

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The oldest layman assumes the title of disciple to the last inducted pyin-sin, and, with clasped hands, addresses him as payā, the highest title the language affords. The monk's commonest actions, walking, eating, sleeping, are referred to in honorific language, different from that which would be used of a layman, or even of the king, performing the same thing. The highest officials bow down before them, and impose upon themselves the greatest sacrifices, both of time and money, to build splendid kyaungs for them, and minister to their wants. Finally, the monk's person is sacred and inviolable. Nothing he does can subject him to the civil [671] law. He bears the title of Thagiwin Mintha, Thagiwin Prince, as the heir of the scion of Kapilawut, and receiver of his inheritance.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MONASTERIES

792 346 OUTSIDE every village in Burma, no matter how small, there stands a pôngyi kyaung. There may have been no one wealthy enough, or zealous enough, to build a pagoda, or the proximity of some ancient and eminently famous shrine may have rendered unnecessary a general subscription for such a purpose, but there is always a building for the mendicants. Away from the noise of the people—for the monastery must not have secular houses near it—surrounded by great, well-foliaged trees, tamarinds, mangoes, jacks, cocoa-nut, and areca, and palmyra palms, sâl trees, and the tha-bye-bin, to shield them from the heat and supply them with fruit, the monks' position is well calculated to attract those who are tired of the tumult and bickerings and sorrows of the world. There the pyin-sin pass their time without a care to ruffle the tranquil current of their lives; without trouble as to their food, for a pious and kindly population supplies them far beyond their wants; with no irksome duties, for nothing is required of them in return; with no care but how to get through the day with as little trouble and ennui as possible; seeking nothing but the fulfilment of the Law, and the path to eventual deliverance from the misery of ever-recurring existences; no wonder many novices come to like the ways of the religious house and yearly swell the ranks of the order, so that there are no signs, two thousand five hundred years after the founding of the religion, of any weakening of its strength.

The first beikkus dwelt under the shade of the forest trees, or perhaps in small huts erected there to shelter them from the pitiless sun and the raging of the storms. This is the explanation of the circumstance that every Budh is specially connected with some tree, as Shin Gautama with the bawdi-bin, the banyan, under which he attained his full dignity, and the eng-gyin-bin, the *Shorea robusta*, under which he was born and died, and, as we are told, the last Budh of this world cycle, Arimadeya, will receive his Buddhaship under the *Mesua ferrea*. Hence the regard for trees which the Burmans share with so many other nations, ancient and modern, and the fact that a clump of palmyras and tamarinds seen in the distance infallibly suggests a monastery. It is not to be supposed, however, that it was the intention of the Lord Buddha that the sacred order should remain far away from mankind in lonesome huts in the depths of the forest. Very early in his teaching, kings, nobles, and wealthy men vied with one another in erecting spacious and magnificent dwellings for the Budh himself and his disciples. Most noted among these were the Zetawun Monastery, built by the rich man Anatabein, within which the celebrated Mingala Thôt sermon was preached by the Buddha to a pious-minded déwa; the Pôppayôn Kyaung and that of Weluwun built by the wealthy dame Withaka and King Bimbathara of Razagyo, to both of which Shin Gautama frequently retired to spend the rainy season of Lent. These were all magnificently adorned; and it is expressly mentioned that the pious need spare themselves no expense in constructing and adorning such religious buildings, though the inhabitant of the most gorgeous of them dresses in no way differently from the humblest anchorite, and has no more costly utensils.

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Ordinarily the monastery is built of teak, though in many places, both in Mandalay and Lower Burma, brick buildings are being erected, notwithstanding the prejudice that exists against them from their greater liability to damage in the case of earthquakes. The shape is always oblong, and the inhabited portion is raised on posts or pillars, some eight or ten feet above the ground. They are, like all the other houses in the country, never more than one story high; for if it is an indignity to a layman to have any one over his head, it is much more so to a member of the [341]

772 346 brotherhood. The space between the ground and the floor of the kyaung is always kept open and is never used except by the school-boys, who have not arrived at notions of personal dignity, and find the locality retired and convenient for games at gôn-nyin-to, and the discussion of forbidden eatables, or subjects of conversation. There are always a few pariah dogs there too, dozing off the surfeit of food they have had from the morning begging-pots, or the offerings at the pagoda. A flight of steps of stone or wood leads up to the verandah, which extends all along the north and south 346 531 sides, and frequently all round the building. If the steps are of stone, or rather brickwork covered with plaster, they are usually adorned at the foot by propylæa in the shape of two bilus, or a couple of manôt-thiha—curious creatures, half man half lion—usually bold enough in conception, if somewhat rough in execution. Tiers of trefoil heads usually characterise the parapets when they are of mason-work. When the ladder is of wood it is covered with spirited carving in deep relief, representing nats and ogres, dancing figures and grim warriors, with abundant scroll-work as everywhere else throughout the building.

From the raised floor thus reached, rises the building, with tier upon tier of dark massive roofs, giving the appearance of many stories when there is actually but one, for the reason already mentioned. This style of roofing was allowed only for religious buildings, for the royal palaces, and for the houses of a few high officials who acquired the honour by special patent, and with whom the form and number of roofs was a matter of regulation settled by the sumptuary laws. Under British rule it is practically confined to monastic buildings and the houses of feudatory chiefs. This spire-like style of roof is called pyathat, and properly there are but three kinds: with three super-imposed roofs called yāma, with five roofs called thuba, and with seven, as the royal palace and the most sacred kyaungs, called thuyāma. The ends of the gables are adorned with pinnacles or finials, each with a curious wooden flag at the top and crowned with a hti, gilt and furnished with bells, copper, silver, or gold, the whole being elaborately carved. The triple, quintuple, and septuple roofs of the monastic houses, with their

elaborate adornments, there is little doubt found their origin 346
in the opportunity which wood gave for the development of 531
ornament ~~in~~ the way of carving. If the wooden monasteries are compared with the strikingly similar wooden churches in Norway—at Hitterdal, for example, or Borgund—we have a proof that nature, under like circumstances, always produces like results from human ingenuity. It may be added that the simple tumulus, which was the original idea of the bell-pagoda, is also found in the Scandinavian *haug*.

The kyaung accommodation is very simple. It consists 792 ●
in the main of a great central hall divided into two portions, 346
one level with the verandah where the scholars are taught, and most of the duties of the monastery carried on, and the other a raised dais, two feet or so above the level of the rest of the building. Seated upon this the yahans are accustomed to receive visitors, and at the back, against the wall, are arranged the images of Buddha, a large one usually standing in the centre on a kind of altar with candles, flowers, praying flags, and other offerings placed before it, and on shelves alongside a number of smaller figures of gold, silver, alabaster, clay or wood, according to the popularity of the kyaung and the faith of the neighbourhood. Close by are placed also the manuscript chests, sadaiks, small shrines, models in wood of monasteries and pagodas, the fans and other religious implements of the pyin-sin and the gifts of the pious, heaped together ordinarily in very careless fashion. The central image is almost invariably placed on the eastern side of the building. There are occasionally dormitories for the monks, but as a rule they sleep in the central hall, where the mats which form their beds may be seen rolled up round the pillow against the wall. In many monasteries there is a special room for the palm-leaf scribes, often detached from the main building, as are the cook-room and the bathing-houses.

The whole area of the extensive compound in which the 792
monastery stands is enclosed by a heavy teak fence with 576
massive squared posts and rails, seven or eight feet high. All within this parawun is sacred ground, and the laity, when they enter, take off their shoes and carry them in their hands. This rule applies to the highest in the land, and when a

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Shan prince or a high official arrives on his elephant, he must dismount at the monastery gate, and come in reverently barefooted. Within the one encircling fence there may be, and usually are, quite a number of separate buildings like that described, with their ecclesiastical roofs towering up, dark, or glittering with gold-leaf among the bright green foliage of the pipul and tamarind trees. Each house has a prior or superior, with his two or three brethren, and a certain number of probationers and scholars, and in the central building dwells the gaing-ôk, or sadaw. In a corner of the compound, or just outside, there is almost always a thein, a building for the performance of various rites and ceremonies, more particularly for the examination and ordination of yahans. The ground on which these stand is not only holy now, but has always been so since the Lord Buddha first preached the Law. When a new thein is to be built it is usually found possible to exhume the remains of an old building of the same kind, thus proving the immemorial sanctity of the site. Otherwise the ground is dedicated to religion in perpetuity. The consecration of the ground is, however, rare in these latter times, though several times the British Government has been asked to make a formal grant of land, to be used for religious purposes. Not far from Rangoon, in the neighbourhood of the Kyaik-ka-san pagoda, there is a thein-gyi, regarded as particularly holy, from the tradition that it is built over the remains of one of the yahanda, who brought the remains of Shin Gautama to Rangoon.

Within the monastery precincts are usually, also, one or two tasaungs, highly ornamented tectums, erected over an image of the Buddha. Very many zealous priors put up marble stones, or finger-posts, at certain points beyond the Parawun, with inscriptions on them to the effect that U Adeisa's or Pyinyazawta's monastery is to the westward, or southward, and you must not kill animals or conduct yourself in an unseemly manner near it. It is the ignoring or the ignorance of this injunction which has brought many sporting Englishmen into trouble, and led them to believe that the yahans condemn shooting altogether, and lay themselves out to thwart it; whereas the intention is only to avoid witnessing, if possible, what they regard as a flagrant

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sin, and especially to protect the pigeons, which usually flock about the monastic trees. Not many people in England would think of going to shoot in a churchyard.

The majority of kyaungs in the jungle and in the smaller towns are plain teak wood, or brick and lime structures, with more or less ornate carving and moulding, and interior decorations; but to see the really gorgeous ecclesiastical buildings one must journey to Mandalay. There the Kyaung-daw-gyi, the Royal Monastery, is the most striking collection of edifices of their kind to be seen in the world. At the foot of Mandalay Hill, just outside the eastern gate of the city, it extends over an area of a good many acres. Every building in it is magnificent; every inch carved with the ingenuity of a Chinese toy; the whole ablaze with gold-leaf and a mosaic of fragments of looking-glass, embedded in a resinous gum, while the zinc roofs glisten like silver in the sun, and the golden bells on the gable spires tinkle melodiously with every breeze. The huge posts are gilt all over, or covered with a red lacquer; the eaves and gables represent all kinds of fantastic and grotesque figures. The interior is no less elaborate, the panels of wall and ceiling are some carved, some diapered with the mosaic mirror work, glistening like polished metal with a rough gold mesh net thrown over it. The wood-carving is particularly fine; the effect in some places, where the birds, pecking, taking wing, alighting, and in every other variety of attitude, are so cut as to appear to underlie the profuse flower tracery, being especially clever. The amount of gilding, spread thickly over every part of the kyaung, alone represents many hundred pounds. Singular from its plain unadorned appearance is the high, brown teak-wood tower in one corner, to which the Sadaw-gyi and his monks occasionally withdraw, to devote themselves to contemplation and the task of learning to know themselves and the khandas, as well as the Seit and the Seikdathit. For this withdrawal from their gorgeous surroundings, to indulge in abstract thought, they have the example and precept of the Lord Buddha himself, who, even when he reposed as a babe on the bosom of his aunt Gautami, gave himself over to contemplation.

The whole of the flat land between Mandalay Hill and

● 792 the city walls was formerly covered with monasteries, each
576 of them standing separate and enclosed within its own
531 parawun, and almost all presided over by a sadaw, a monk
of the highest rank. They were thus entirely independent of each other. One of the most interesting for Englishmen is the Thiho Taik, the "Ceylon Monastery," presided over by Lingayāmā, a sadaw who was in great favour with Mindôn Min, the last king but one. The term taik is always applied to a "bishop's monastery," as implying that his is the chief of a number of kyaungs, all under his care, and in which he makes occasional sojourns. The Thiho Taik is peculiar for its trim appearance. It is very new; the under part of all the buildings is of brick; the compound is kept scrupulously clean; there is not a single large tree in it, and the parawun is a neat sawn-wood fence, instead of being, as is the case almost everywhere else, composed simply of huge stems of trees placed side by side in the ground. The sadaw himself is a very enlightened man. He has been several times to Rangoon to worship at the
792 Great Pagoda, and to decide on questions in dispute. He
217 has, in his library, copies of the English Scriptures in the
Burmese version of Judson, and has read them through. Numbers of American Baptists' tracts, and the sacred books of other religions, have also a place in his manuscript chests. These are all deposited in a separate building standing in the middle of the enclosure, and used for no other purpose, except that the scribes sit here making copies of borrowed MSS., or setting down notes of the learned bishop himself.
212 The palm-leaf book is still universal, and the work of making
up a volume is therefore very laborious; for the most practised manipulator cannot, with his agate style and light strip of palmyra-leaf, exceed the speed of an English boy who has just got over the preliminary difficulties of pot-hooks and hangers. The letters scratched on the leaf are made more distinct by the application of crude earth-oil. This serves to darken the writing, as well as to preserve the book. The regular scribes are always laymen, and it is a matter of very considerable unpleasantness to the cenobites, that the cleverest of them are very often uncommonly bad livers, spending all their gains in libations of "Old Tom," or little

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Upper Burma

balls of opium. These vagaries are, however, frequently 212
winked at, for a copyist who can write neatly and with
accuracy is far from being common.

The Thiho Taik library is a model in its way. It is 792 ●
nearly the best monastic collection in Mandalay, and is 217
certainly far better arranged than any other. The sadaiks,
or manuscript boxes, are arranged in three rows, one over
the other; the thôts and zāts—the sermons and birth-stories
—of the Lord Buddha below; above them the Cinghalese
commentaries and exegeses; and on the top shelf Burmese
translations and the explanations of various learned sadaws.
Each chest contains a large number of different books, every
separate collection of leaves being enclosed between wooden
boards, some plain, some carved in high relief, with figures
of déwas and demons. Round this is wrapped a kabalwè,
a square piece of cloth with inwoven scenes from the sacred
books, or portions of the Law, and the formulæ used at the
pagoda. Most of these are of silk, very often with narrow
slips of bamboo worked in so as to give stiffness to the
whole. Instead of this, or sometimes in addition, is used
the sā-si-gyo, a riband, about two fingers' breadth, and
upwards of a yard in length. This is knitted or crocheted [212]
in a peculiarly close fashion, which puzzles English ladies. [531]
On it is worked the name of the owner, his titles and distinctions,
and whatever other aspirations he chooses to add.
They are very neat, and quite easy to read, an advantage
which does not always characterise Berlin wool work. The
king's grants of forest land, monopolies, and the like, were
usually executed in this way.

All the boxes are kept carefully locked, and the door is
barred at night, for such a library represents years of labour,
and could only with the greatest difficulty be replaced. It [184]
is only in Mandalay that libraries of any value are to be
found. In Lower Burma the majority of the kyaungs do
not even possess a complete copy of the three parts of the
Bitaghat, the Buddhist Bible, and some few have nothing
beyond a copy of the Kammawāsā, and perhaps a Malla
Lingaya Wuttu, a life of the Lord Buddha, or something of
the kind. Many others have, no doubt, valuable collections,
but the monks are ignorant, they cannot read the books

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themselves, and they do not care to exhibit them to those who can. Consequently, they moulder away in the bottom of the sadaik, crushed away into the darkest corner of the main room of the monastery. It is, perhaps, not surprising that the most learned monks do not belong to the large towns, but come from remote kyaungs in the depths of the jungle. This is true also of Upper Burma, for though the sadaws in Mandalay are the most learned in the country, they have acquired their reputation in jungle monasteries, and have only been summoned to the royal city when their fame has spread over the land, and the title of royal teacher has been conferred on them.

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The main room of Lingayāmā's Monastery contains a great number of curiosities collected by the Burmese Embassies on their travels through Europe. Most of these were presented by the Kin Wun-gyi, the head of the mission, and are in many ways most interesting. Prominent is a large photograph album, emblazoned with the Italian royal arms and containing a fine collection of views. Another album is filled with cartes of members of the Embassy, notably of the lamented Naingan-gyaw Wun-dauk, the portly and good-natured "Pio Nono" of the *Daily News*, who seems never to have missed being photographed wherever he went, and figured in every style, from the penny smudge, apparently taken on a country race-course or outside Battersea Park, to the coloured and gilt grandeur of a Neapolitan cabinet. The author of the *Encyclopædia of Burmese Literature* had no notion of changing the expression of his face, however. He looks stolidly like just having had his dinner in every impression, and the multiplication of photographs serves principally as a means of comparing different styles of art, and exhibiting the great stock of clothing which the worthy Wun-dauk carried about with him.

In addition to the photographs, there is a great collection of engravings, some of them very valuable; and mixed up with these are to be found some very queer items—old hotel bills, advertisements of gigantic hosiery establishments, with pictures of the same at the top, circus play-bills, shilling view guides, some sheets of the *Graphic*, the front page of the wrapper of *Punch*, and a few railway tickets. These are

all carefully preserved, along with many other gifts of the 000
home-keeping pious; rolls of yellow cloth, Dutch clocks,
betel-nut boxes, spare spittoons, and begging-pots, rugs, and 792 ●
pots of honey. The images of the kyaung, contrary to the 778
usual custom, are placed in a glass case in the centre of the
room, instead of at the east end. This situation is due to
their value, most of them being of silver or gold, and one or
two studded with precious stones.

The Thiho Taik was certainly one of the neatest and 792
most methodically arranged monasteries to be seen any- 346
where. Unfortunately it was burnt with many others in 531
the year of the Annexation. There were many more
gorgeously decorated, and still more that were larger. The
biggest in Burma was probably the Maha Yatana Paungdaw, which stood near the great Arakan Pagoda in the suburbs of Mandalay, and was in great part burnt down in 1879. The building, with its encircling platform, measured 440 feet by 200, and was supported by 404 massive teak trees, none less than two feet in diameter, and the central posts, which upheld the topmost tier of roof, must have been quite eighty feet in height. Near Maulmein, in Lower Burma, there is another kyaung remarkable for the huge girth of its posts.

The brick monasteries are commonest in the neighbourhood of Mandalay and other old capitals. They are covered with chunam, and in place of having a spire, are themselves built in the form of a pya-that, rising in the shape of rectangular terraces to a considerable height. Round the central hall, which is often divided by a gilt railing across the centre, are a number of cloisters and corridors, which ensure a perpetual cool breeze. Many of these monasteries are adorned with fresco paintings in the hall and in the honeycomb of corridors, representing usually scenes from the Zāts, passages in the life of Shin Gautama, an especially favourite one being the Jataka of Nemi, where the pious prince is represented as a white ghostly figure in a chariot, passing, like the *pius Æneas*, through the dismal abodes of hell and the six heavens of the nats. Some other representations portray the occupations of daily life, such as feasting, hunting, weaving, and the different nationalities to be seen

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-19 910 AP1 Burma AP1
Burmese AP4
Indians

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in the country. A very common scene shows the punishment which awaits fishermen in the next existence. The miserable destroyer of animal life is represented as dangling by the tongue on a fish-hook, while demons jerk him into the air, and drop him back into a lake of burning pitch. Many of them have inscriptions below to explain the subject of the picture. Thus in Pagàn:—

"When King Ne-bin Min-gyi reigned in Methila over the ten governors, according to the old books, the Thagya Min came from the nat heavens to help him."

"In the Monastery Yatana Shwe-daing, our Lord preached the Patenôn Tagayo, and remained several days."

"Shin Thumeda (Gautama), in the land of Thudawdana, received the Buddhaship under the banyan tree."

"Payā Alaung Theidat (the embryo Budh, Prince Siddartha), the King's son, married 4000 charming Yathe-mya."

"Our Lord rides on the elephant Nalagiri."

And so on in great variety. One also often finds such a notice as this scrawled on the wall: "In order to be prepared and to gain happiness in the seats of men, of nats, and of ne'ban, the rice-pots are set in order, the images are erected, and the paintings on the walls painted."

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The monasteries are built, supported, and furnished by the pious, but there are not a few of them that have considerable sums of money laid away, usually under the control of the kappiya-dāyaka, the layman who lives in the kyaung, and provides for the wants of its inmates. A number of the royal fields round about Aungbinle, where the Burmese army assembled to seek victory before entering on a campaign, were set apart for the use of the Royal monastery at Payā Gyi, and the revenues were kept in a huge money-chest, which was always under the care of a guard of soldiers. Much of the money was devoted to the adornment of the adjacent pagoda. None can be spent on embellishing the monastery itself. That would be as great a sin as if a monk should build one for himself, besides that it would be depriving the populace of much opportunity for gaining merit.

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There are a few monasteries of the Pônnas here and there in the large towns throughout the country. These

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma (Indians) AP1
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Brahmin priests were originally brought captives from Manipur, and have been employed as astrologers ever since, their ranks being occasionally recruited by new arrivals. One of the requests preferred to Colonel Symes on his embassy to Ava in 1796 was that he would persuade the Governor-General to send a learned Brahmin and his wife to the capital. The race has been maintained tolerably pure, and the Pônna is readily distinguishable in the streets from the pôngyi. The astrologers muster naturally in greatest force in Mandalay, and their monastery there is situated in a magnificent grove of trees south of the town, and close to the cemeteries. Unlike the native religious, they do not raise their houses on posts above the ground, but follow the Indian custom of having the mat-covered earth for their floor. Foreigners are not admitted into their temples, but there is no objection to the images being brought out by a Pônna for exhibition to his friends. They worship Krishna and twenty-five other deities, but have all but no congregation, few of their faith coming to Mandalay, and those laymen who were carried away at the same time as themselves into captivity having turned to the Buddhist faith.

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No yahan is allowed to have a separate monastery built for him until he has spent five full Wā under the discipline of a prior. These Lents must also be consecutive. According to their seniority in this respect the monks obtain names. Thus a pyin-sin who has spent five years—which of course is implied by the Wā—is called Anuti, and is a fit object for the pious to honour by erecting a special kyaung for him. When he has been ten years in the order he is addressed as Myizza-ti, and those who have remained steadfastly for twenty years, attain to the full honour of Mahā-ti. Such a self-denying man is always sure of a magnificent funeral when he dies.

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It is a very good point about the life in the monastery that the great austerities and absurd mortifications of the flesh indulged in by the Brahminical houses find no place with the Buddhists, who reject them as unnecessary and unprofitable. The life of the initiated is one of constant self-denial; all superfluities and luxuries are renounced; all that is calculated to excite the passions is forbidden; but there

785 are no revolting self-inflicted penances such as are regarded
792 as meritorious in themselves by the followers of the Hindu creed. Fasts and penitential deeds are indeed recommended to those living in the world, but that is because such methods are the best means for weakening the passions, and increasing the power of the spirit as against the flesh. They are not a part of perfection. They are not even on the direct way to the attainment of perfection. That is only to be achieved by meditation, by pondering on the various aspects of the substances and truths in the world. Therefore the pyin-sin do not make any difference, except in the case of the very austere, in the observance of the appointed duty days, during which it is incumbent on the laity to abstain from food up till mid-day. After noontide the yahan never eats. Considerable scandal is sometimes caused by the tricks of sundry of the weaker vessels. They sit all day with their back to the sun, and if in the afternoon they feel hungry, they ask a scholar if it is yet noon. The wily kyaung-tha, thinking to escape a thrashing on the morrow, promptly answers that it is a good way off twelve o'clock yet, and brings wherewithal to solace the hungry religious. The falsehood, or *suppressio veri*, on the part of the scholar is a venial offence at his age, and the yahan escapes sin, for if he breaks the law it is
805 because he was deceived. Again, Englishmen are often puzzled to know, in a country where, even now, clocks are by no means common, and where they are found, usually show the wrong time, how it is that the people know what o'clock it is. The matter is simple enough when the sun is to be seen, for its course is pretty nearly the same all the year round, and the Burman is tolerably skilled in guessing the time from its height or from the length of the shadows thrown. But it is different during the rainy season, when the sun is often not to be seen for weeks at a time. Here, however, so say the yahans, whom it most seriously concerns, a singular dispensation of nature steps in to their aid. The cocks and hens of Buddhist countries are not as the tame villatic fowl of Western lands. I do not refer to their powers of flying, which are sufficiently irritating to hungry life-taking voyagers, but to the fact that the cocks crow at stated hours, four times a day—at sunrise, noon, sundown, and midnight.

805 They thus inform the inmates of the kyaung when they must cease eating for the day, and enable them to obey the provisions of the Patimauk. This useful acquirement of the Buddhist chanticleer was acquired in a singular way. Sundry books of the Bedin were burnt as containing unlawful cabalistic teachings. Among these was the Ā-tappana Bedin. When the fire had died out the barn-door flock came and pecked at the ashes, and so assimilated the astronomic lore contained in the book. I never had the opportunity of watching any particular cock to see if he actually crowed four times a day at the times reported. They fly about so, that for purposes of observation they might just as well be jungle fowl.

792 ● Thus even the powers of nature conspire for the well-being of the monks. It has been shown how the laity provide them with food and splendid dwellings. It may be unhesitatingly asserted that the most luscious fruits and the most delicate viands all find their way to the monasteries. 792 312 A single instance will show to what an extent this is carried. In jungle places, where in the dry season there is often a great dearth of water, one spring is always set apart for the kyaung, because it would be a great sin, as well as being unpleasant for the yahan, to drink water which had been stirred up, and for that reason would be more likely to contain animal life. This reservation often compels the entire village to walk a mile or more for a supply of water, a very serious inconvenience to the easy-going Burman. In order that strangers and passers-by may have no excuse for drinking from the monastic well, a yellow cloth is hung over it from a bush or a post erected for the purpose. Here again a stumbling-block and stone of offence is set up in the way of the ignorant or unreflecting foreigner.

792 798 Everything near the monastery is rendered sacred, not merely when it is enclosed in the parawun, but as far as the prior may choose to proclaim it. This is especially common in the case of the large tanks or bricked reservoirs which the pious dig in many parts of the country. These are frequently well stocked with fish and turtle, and when the monks declare them sacred, the fish often become wonderfully tame from the abundant food that is brought them by yahans

●792 778 solicitous as to their welfare. A regular thing after worship in the Arakan Pagoda at Mandalay is to go and feed the great turtle in the tank at the back of the cloisters. There are rows of women selling balls of cooked rice, cakes, and other delicacies which the pious buy for the consumption of the sacred reptiles. There was great consternation when, in March 1879, the tank dried up and many of the huge creatures died before the people could get water enough from the river, brought in chatties and household utensils, to save them from such a sad fate. The circumstance was supposed to be a sign from the nat guardians of the place of their abhorrence and anger at the shedding of the royal blood by King Theebaw in his holocaust of February. But taking further and totally innocent life seemed a rather singular fashion of expressing disapprobation.

778 The dog-fish of the Thihadaw Monastery, situated on a small island in the middle of the third and lowest defile of the Irrawaddy, are particularly celebrated, and having been referred to by every traveller in Burma, the little kyaung with its stone pagoda (one of the few of that material in the country) has become a regular show-place for all passengers to Bhamaw. The great five-feet-long, gape-mouthed creatures seem to know their bounds, and do not wander farther than half a mile or so from their sanctuary.

But this is far from being such a remarkable case as previous writers have seemed to imply. There is a tank with tame fish at the Maze Monastery near the Shwe Dagên pagoda in Rangoon. All monastic tanks have fish more or less tame, according to the good nature and sympathies of the cenobites, and there is, or was, at least one other place on the Irrawaddy where the fish were as domestic as the dog-fish of Thihadaw. This was near the Kyaik-lat pagoda and monastery, on one of the numerous mouths of the great river. I knew the place well years ago, and then there used to be great conflicts between the ill-conditioned, impious fishermen and the monks. The fish were of the species called nga-dan, well known on English breakfast-tables under the name of "butter-fish," and to provide for the unscrupulous appetites of the foreigner, people used to come at night to catch the unsuspecting nga-dan. The

778 were still a good number of the tame fish, tame enough to allow you to stroke them and put gold-leaf on their heads, but there were far from being as many as there should have been had the villagers duly observed the teachings of the Buddha. [177·77] The primeval simplicity of the people is fast fading away throughout the province. The travelling Englishman finds no difficulty in either getting people to sell fowls, or others still less hampered by doubts, to wring their necks and cook them.

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105 The monastery sometimes has a name of its own; more frequently it is called by the Pali name of the town or pagoda near which it lies, or by that of its prior. The Thayet-daw Kyaung in Rangoon is so called from the magnificent mango-trees that grow within it. Well known in Upper Burma is the monastery of U Sandimā, or the Mingala-san Taik, where King Mindôn received his instruction in the religious texts which he knew so well. The name is usually given by the founder after consultation with the proposed head of the community, and it cannot be said that the consultation results in much originality.

792 Here and there throughout the country there are a few yatheit, hermits who withdraw into solitude in forests and desert places, and, like the old rathi (from which word of course the Burman term is derived), they live on wild fruits and roots and the chance alms of passers-by. But as the rathi were closely connected with the Brahmins, and as the custom is not recommended by the Buddha, nor looked upon with favour by the people, it is not of frequent occurrence. Occasionally a very austere monk buries himself in the solitude of the jungle during the season of Lent, in order the better to devote himself to meditation, but even this is not common. Nevertheless in the rocks above Nyaung-u, near Pagān, there are a few cells dug out high up in the cliffs which are always occupied, as any one who has gone out to shoot the rock pigeons which abound there will very speedily find. The yatheit comes down, confiscates the bag, and drives away the sportsman with terrible threats of future punishment. Such caves and holes in the rocks are not uncommon on other parts of the Irrawaddy, wherever the ascetic is able to climb up and finds the stratum soft enough to hack

out with his axe and hollow with his finger-nails. There were 792 ●
a few such cells cut in the rocks at the back of Mandalay
Hill, and visitors to the sacred spot occasionally came across
one of the hermits striding along, wrapped in thought, grasping
an iron staff hung with rings, the rattle of which warns
the people to get out of the way and not disturb the holy
man's meditations. A few go away from human society
altogether, just as St. Simeon Stylites isolated himself on a
pillar, and the old Culdee monks from the north of England
and Scotland wandered off to the snowy wastes of Iceland,
there to seek repose and relief from the turmoil of the world.
It is said that the Thadda, the grammar, was added to the [788]
Bitaghat, that the hermits who had withdrawn to the jungle
might not destroy the power of the sermons and lauds by
mispronunciation.

Mandalay Hill is always occupied, for the spot is particularly 778
sacred. King Mindôn used to send thither daily 741
a hundred fowls which had been bought and saved from
death, and the pious gave them plenty to eat. Similar
proceedings caused the sneer of Purchas, "For men they
hadde not an hospitall that were thus hospitall to fowles";
but this is hardly deserved, at any rate in Burma. There
in every monastery the Kappiya-dayaka has a stock of
money, raised by selling the presents given to the monks,
which he devotes in charity to the well-deserving sick and
to poor travellers, while any one is welcome at all times to
shelter and food in the kyaung as long as he conducts himself
properly. The yatheit may be looked upon with pious
awe for his austerities and mortifications of the flesh, but the
ordinary pyin-sin is more favourably regarded. The building 782
of monasteries and the giving of presents to their 735
inmates is a constant strain on the generosity of the people.
It is far more difficult to keep the balance of merit on the
right side in Burma than in other countries. Almsgiving is
a constant and imperative expense, in addition to regular
and personal worship at the pagoda. In Thibet wind or
water drives the prayer-machines for extinguishing sin, and
the goodman acquires merit while he is snoring at night
with his wife at his back. In some parts practical householders
are able to calculate exactly what is set down to

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But in Rangoon it has assumed in recent years a form which gives a great deal of offence to all the more serious people, and is especially condemned by the austere Sulagandis. Instead of having the offerings displayed in their houses and giving them to the yahans when they come round in the grey of the morning, the new fashion with the inhabitants of Rangoon is to carry all the alms to the monastery overnight, set them up in goodly array, there and then hold receptions, sing songs, dance, play musical instruments, and generally turn the quiet monastery into the semblance of an uproarious "penny gaff." This objectionable innovation has gradually arisen out of the practice of a few of the more pious old people who at the end of Lent used to go in the evenings with ahlu for the pyinsin, listen to some pious discourses, or the recitation of some sacred zāt, and then return betimes to bed. But now the frivolous find monks not less carnal-minded than themselves. Subscriptions are raised for weeks beforehand to make a grand display. One of the yahans is asked to grant the zayat near his house for the occasion. Some of the monks of the Thayet-daw kyaung in Godwin Road, which is the chief sinner in this respect, are even so shameless as actually to go touting about for people to take their zayats, or at times even part of the monastery itself.

Then at nightfall, on the full moon, the people begin to troop in. Those who have taken the management of the almsgiving are there before. We enter by one of the little wooden bridges, and come across a pya-that, a presentation spire, immediately, glittering bright in the moonlight and the glaring torches which are gathered thick farther on among the pôngyis' dwelling-places and the mango-trees from which the monastery takes its name. The spire has just been deposited, and the band has barely stopped the music which sounds so strange within the sacred parawun. But there is more coming that will be a far greater shock to up-country notions of religious propriety. The first place we come to is a zayat, and Maung Maung, the dispenser of hospitality, recognises us and calls us up. All his female friends are arranged in a row at the back, dressed in their finest, and before them, just as at the Tasaungmôn alms-

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feast, are heaped up piles of fruits, savoury curries, cakes, biscuits, and sweetmeats of all kinds, intended for the monks; while scattered about are great *repoussé* silver bowls full of sherbet, gold and silver cups, lamps, mirrors, and all the familiar adornments, fit enough for a private house, but singularly out of place where a gay piece of tapestry hung up barely conceals the image at the eastern side of the rest-house. Maung Maung offers us some lemonade, and we light cheroots, exchange a few compliments with the ladies, and pass on, just as a noisy half-dozen of young Englishmen from one of the mercantile houses come scrambling up the ladder-like steps. It would be well if these gentlemen would remember that each of the houses is to all intents and purposes a private assembly for the night, and that, though the host always welcomes them, he understands English, and does not by any means relish the mocking comments which are lavished on everything, and still less is inclined to approve of the criticisms passed on the ladies. But then there are so few Englishmen in Burma who understand the very shortest sentence in the language that they may be pardoned if they mistake for a promiscuous saturnalia what is nominally a religious ceremony. We leave them joking with Maung Maung and the hostess, as she offers them some beer—beer in a monastery! But then it is known that Englishmen will be there, and the Burman's notion is that an Englishman only leaves off drinking beer when he drinks brandy, so this last indignity is not objected to by the yahans.

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Farther on we come to the place we are specially in search of. The master of ceremonies here is our friend Maung Po Si, a Patama Byan, a certificated theologian and long resident in Mandalay, qualified, therefore, to be a yahan himself, and from his previous experiences, one would think, not at all likely to countenance such open contempt of the provisions of the Wini, which treatise his success in the above-mentioned "theological tripos" implies that he knows by heart. But "Mr. Grandfather Oil" is very emphatically in the world of kāma; he is far from having beaten down the passions, and his place is the most startlingly secular of them all. He has got the kyaung of a myizzi mati, a pôngyi who has been ten Lents in the Order, and

527 ●792 183 ought therefore to scorn such desecration for any purpose whatever, and certainly should not be tempted by the offer of a feast for his palate. But the fact remains that not only has he given up the front part of his kyaung, all but the elevated dais on the eastern side, where the images stand and visitors are received, but there is actually a play going on, trumpets braying, drums beating, and the bamboo clappers sounding high over all. It is a zāt, a birth-story certainly, but that does not make it any less a sin for the pôngyi to be so near, and with all those thirty pretty girls looking on too. The monk is behind the curtain which shuts off the undesecrated part of the building, it is true, but he can hardly be asleep with all that music, surely, and it is a crime for a member of the Order to listen to music. Yet who is to condemn him to penance when the prior's house is very little better? In some of the kyaungs, indeed, the younger yahans take very little trouble to conceal the fact that they are looking through the chinks of the slight hangings which cut off their sleeping-places from the noisy throng on the other side. The Englishmen, when they come round, push aside the kalagas to see what is behind, stumble over the peeping postulants, and scare the conscience-stricken "ascetics" almost out of their senses, under the impression that it is a bilu who has been enabled to gain access, and is going to devour them incontinently. Nevertheless there is no check in the revelry. It goes on until far into the night, and increases in noise the later it gets. The liquor [273] which has been brought for expected visiting foreigners cannot be left behind in the kyaungs; they are not low enough for that yet. Consequently, the laymen must drink it. The result is that as time goes on there are quarrels and fights; and in this very Thayet-daw kyaung in the Thadingyut of 1879 a man was stabbed and died within the limits of the parawun. Little wonder that the strict Sulagandis are gaining over many of the more respectable inhabitants of Rangoon, for even this horror has not diminished the popularity of the wāgyut alms-feast.

The noise and hubbub go on till far into the morning, and when at last the people go, the monks may be supposed to have a little rest, for they can hardly have slept much

before, however steadily they lay on their mats. The offerings 527
are eaten next morning, and it is greatly to be feared that 792
there are many abstentions from the morning's round of 183
alms-begging. Such dissipation must scatter to the winds
any merit acquired by diligent piety and meditation in the
long weeks of Lent. It is only to be seen in Rangoon and 369
a few other places where many foreigners congregate. The 527
description is from the "country mouse" point of view.

In country towns, revels of this kind are never seen, and even in Mandalay, though there are festivities in abundance, the monasteries are never invaded in this scandalous way. The difference is that between the primitive Buddhist and the highly sophisticated latitudinarian. A more harmless and decidedly prettier custom is the illumination, called taungpyi pwè, of the pagodas and the town. In Rangoon a very fine effect is produced by hanging the Sule Pagoda, in Fytche Square, all round with Chinese lanterns, from the base up to the top of the thabeit-hmauk, where the body of the shrine begins to narrow into the spire. The rings of coloured light narrowing upwards in a veritable pyramid of fire, produce one of the finest sights of the kind to be seen in the country. The street lamps, however, somewhat handicap the simple means of illumination open to the inhabitants, and to see the illumination of a town at its best one must go to a place where there are no street lamps. There all the pagodas and many of the private houses are lighted up, and the contrast to the ordinary gloom is startling. Candles are placed on posts at intervals of ten paces
in every street, and the sè-eing gaungs have very plain-worded [633]
instructions as to what will happen to them if any of the lights in front of the ten houses of which they have charge go out. Mandalay Hill at such a time was a fine sight and still is, though it is no more a royal town. The two covered ways which lead up the steep uneven sides to the pagoda and the richly gilt Gautama on the top, look like streams of flame, or fiery serpents from the haunted nat-taung, under he shade of the Shan hills. But the monasteries which 'uster close in to the foot of the sacred hill are all as dark and still as on any night in the middle of the Wā. No unseemly orgies are permitted there. In the town, on the

789 the wiles of the nats are harmless. In case of the utmost
776 need, even the ordinary tharana-gôn, the payā, tayā, thengā,
is of much avail, if only uttered with faith. It is with the
idea of keeping away bilus, tasés, and demons that the
● [792] members of the yellow robe are often summoned to death-
[764] beds. There is no thought of the monk administering
spiritual consolation to the dying man. The good influence
of his pious presence keeps away evil spirits, and nothing
more. No exhortations of the yahan can alter the balance
of merit and demerit which is already cast up for the dying
man. On the other hand, in out-of-the-way parts of the
country, and especially in the hills, spirit shrines are not
unseldom found actually inside a monastery compound.

and tanks, and cases of sporadic cholera are the consequence. So says the civil surgeon; but the Burmans do not believe him. They are convinced that a nat-so, some evil spirit, has taken up his abode in the place, and is exacting revenge for some real or fancied insult. They accordingly take this means of forcing him to quit; and if the malignant nat can be supposed to have any nerves whatever, it certainly ought to be effective. 753 755

The brethren of the monastery discountenance the practice as far as they can—as indeed every one not afflicted with a dulness of hearing might be expected to do. It is a remnant of the old geniolatry, and, having nothing to do with pure Buddhism, confounds the dewas of the six heavens with the heathenish spirits of the old wild tribes. But cholera is a pestilence that regards not the yellow robe of the mendicant any more than the gay paso of the frivolous; and so the pôngyis hold the ceremony which immediately precedes the wild riot called thayè tôpthi, and display their opposition no more violently than by getting out of the way as fast as the dignified walk prescribed to the Assembly of the Perfect permits. 755 795

It is related that long ago, at the time of the beginning of religion, the terrible pestilence swept over Kapilawut, the city of Thudawdana, the father of the Lord Buddha. Only at the intercession and by the merits of the prayers and good works of the saviour of the world and his assembly, was the plague stayed, and the city saved from desolation—hence the function called pareit yôtthi. Cholera has broken out in the village. Several deaths have occurred in succession with the terrible suddenness which is characteristic of the disease. The dirges played by the bands for the dead fade into one another and break out all down the street. Then one of the chief men of the place makes preparations and begs the monks to come down from the monastery. A raised dais is put up at the back of the room for the accommodation of the yahans, and covered with mats. Offerings to the holy men are arranged in a long row before the platform—rice, fruit, flowers, betel-boxes, pillows, cups and bowls. Alongside of these are placed the vessels which the monastic superior is to consecrate—nyaung ye-o, sacred to the use of 755 792

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the religious, and pareit-o, so called from the ceremony. These are partially filled with water, leaves of the thabye bin, a species of *Eugenia*, are put in, and along with them coarse yellow string wound round a small stick. When all is ready the monks come down in the grey of the evening, moving, as always, in slow procession of Indian file from the kyaung, followed by their disciples carrying the large monastic fan, or perhaps an arm-load of palm-leaf manuscript books. Meanwhile, and all through the ceremony, the people from all parts of the village come in, each person bearing his pareit-o, with its supply of thabye bin leaves and modicum of yellow string. The pôngyis, their eyes fixed humbly on the ground, take their allotted seats without a word to any one, not even to the master of the house. All the people kneel as they come in, and remain in the half-kneeling, half-prostrate position customary before members of the thenga.

The abbot of the kyaung then begins the service, longer or shorter according to the capability or inclination of the officiator. Certain formulæ reciting the praises of the Lord Buddha are always chanted; the Sèba Thila, the Ten Commandments incumbent on all believers on worship days and on the earnest always, are usually declaimed. Sometimes it ends with this; sometimes, if the abbot is an enthusiast, the law is preached. Then he extends his hands over the collected vessels and consecrates them, and the religious ceremony is over. The yahans rise and file back to their kyaung as solemnly as they came. The presents made to them are carried off at the same time, some by the boy pupils, some by the donors. The people then take away their pots to their houses, and shortly afterwards, at a given signal, the wild clattering on the roofs begins. This lasts till the performers are exhausted. Fortunately that usually occurs within half an hour. If the malignant demon can hold out so long, it is much more than most Europeans can, and their futile remonstrances and threats sometimes add to the general din, especially if, as not unfrequently happens, the disturbance is repeated for several nights.

000 There is this much, however, to be said in favour of the custom, that it often actually does stay the spread of cholera

643 Some thirty people about the Court were beheaded, and the queen dowager was relegated to the convent.

643 177-64 872 Thibaw himself was brought up in an uncle's house and used to be unmercifully bullied by his cousins. When Dr. Marks, the eminent S.P.G. missionary, came to Mandalay and established a school, the late king asked what was the best age for a Burman to commence learning English. The reverend gentleman said, "About twelve years old." King Mindôn called for "all his sons that were twelve years old or thereabouts." Eleven were produced, and among them was Thibaw. The future king went to the royal school, but he sat apart from his late victims, and never came to school on the same elephant with them. He was a surly, morose boy, not very good at his lessons, and once or twice narrowly escaped the usual result of such conduct. I believe he was never actually birched, but he had several times to stand in the corner. When he left he was able to read a little, but he has forgotten all his English now. He used to be fond of cricket, and slogged away in fairly good pendulum form; but he never would field out, and used unprincely language to any one who bowled him. He was the youngest of the batch by a month or two, and was always quarrelling with his brothers and bullying the wretched slave who attended him and carried his cheroots and betel-nut. But nobody paid much attention to his vagaries then, for he was twentieth or thirtieth son, and the Mekhaya prince, the eldest, might very easily have been his father, or even grandfather.

643 ● 792 After he left the S.P.G. Royal School, King Mindôn made him a koyin, a neophant, in the royal monastery. There he seemed to get on better. At any rate when his novitiate was over, he passed with honours as Patama Kyaw, an examination in the Bitaghat thônbông, the three "baskets" of the Buddhist law, and sundry other volumes of ritual and controversy. This was what first drew the old king's attention to him. Mindôn Min was a very pious old gentleman, and had a particular delight in his title of Convener of the Fifth Great Synod. When therefore young Thibaw made a score in the Turanian Theological Tripos, his father bored everybody with his talk about the juvenile

divine, and was not far off imagining that he was an embryo Budh. Thibaw an avatar of Arimadeya! Bradlaugh in the Salvation Army! Other people knew better even then. Even in those days Thibaw was a disgraceful little rip. The present Queen of the South and sundry other little petticoats came to flirt with him and his companions in the monastery. An ascetic should not even look at a woman, and the old kyaungpogo, the abbot of the royal mendicants, was terribly scandalised, and it is whispered about that he tied the raffish young princeling's hands up to a tree and swished him soundly. Some colour is lent to the report by the fact that Thibaw dismissed the venerable recluse as soon as he ascended the throne. However that may be, the old king heard nothing about it, and went on believing the "Senior Theolog" to be a miracle of piety and learning, and the sacred cocks and hens on Mandalay Hill had double rations for a month in honour of the event. Nevertheless, he did not by any means intend Thibaw to succeed him on the throne. The Nyaungyan was the man he named. But the mother of the Supayalat, now Thibaw's queen, took the matter in hand. She knew that Thibaw was deeply in love with her daughter, and thought she could easily manage the moon-struck, Pali-spouting novice. She communicated her views to the Kin Wunmingyi, the head of the ministry. That diplomatic old gentleman was equally deceived, and thought he would have no trouble in leading the verdant recluse as he pleased. The matter was arranged; the elder princes were all seized and thrown into prison before Mindôn Min died. Thibaw tolerated the Kin Wunmingyi for a short time, and let him formulate a wonderful production which the Turanian Foreign Secretary called a constitution. When the simple quondam mendicant found himself firm on the throne, and when the Nyaungyan, his great fear, had got away from the British Residency in Mandalay, and was safe in Calcutta, Thibaw threw off the mask. Eighty-six of his blood relations were battered and choked to death, or buried alive. The Kin Wungyi's hapless constitution was crumpled up nd chucked over the frontier, and Thibaw stood forth as t e most inhuman of a long line of savage despots. The

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CHAPTER LXIII

A PÔNGYI BYAN

THE veneration and respect which meet the yahan all 792
through his life are extended to his remains when he 764
dies, or rather when he leaves this world. The monk 554
does not "die" as a common layman does, he does not even, like the king, "ascend to the nat-déwas' village." The holy man in his last existence must have been holy in order to have accumulated the sum of merits which enabled him upon earth to remain steadfast in the sacred order. When he passes away, he "returns" to the highest heavens of nats, or to the meditative states of zān, or perhaps even to the pure and immaterial realms of arupa. Therefore a mendicant's funeral is called a pôngyi byan—the return of the great glory. Even a junior member is burnt with great solemnity and state; but when a distinguished brother dies, one famous for his learning, his austerity, or the great number of Lents he has spent in the cloister, the obsequies swell into a ceremonial which attracts people from all parts of the country.

As soon as life leaves the body, the corpse is carefully 792
washed in the usual way by the dead pôngyi's chief 764
supporters and some of the monastic scholars. Then the intestines are taken out and buried in a quiet corner of the monastery grounds, or near the pagoda. The cavity of the stomach is then filled up with hot ashes, sawdust, a few spices, and whatever other available substances may be presumed likely to dry up the humours, and then the skin is sewed together again. A layer of wax is sometimes spread all ver the body, but more often it is simply tightly swathed white cloth from head to foot. This linen cloth is then

● 792 764 varnished over with wood oil, so that every particle of the corpse may, if necessary, be covered with gold leaf, and this, except in very poor neighbourhoods, is always done. Where there is not money enough, the yellow sacred garments are wrapped round the corpse instead. The arms are always folded on the chest. The body is then placed in the coffin. This is not, as is the case with laymen, made of planks, but of a single log roughly hollowed out, and with a very substantial lid. This lid is not fastened down for a considerable time, and occasionally a bamboo pipe leads from the coffin into the ground to assist in drying up the embalmed body. The fastening down of the cover is sometimes rather an unpleasant spectacle. Many of the old pôngyis keep logs in their monasteries to serve for their coffins, and these, when hollowed out, are not always a satisfactory fit. Bishop Bigandet tells of a horrible sight he witnessed, when the lid had to be crushed on with wedges and the blows of a heavy mallet. The majority of aged yahans are, however, so shrivelled and shrunken before they die, that such an occurrence, which, it must not be supposed, is any less dreadful to a Burman than it is to an Englishman, could only happen very rarely, and then probably would not be carried out in the way which so justly shocked the good bishop.

The inner coffin is then, like the body, varnished with thitsi, and gilt all over. For it is prepared an outer casket called a payaung-bông, which is as magnificent as the skill of the local artificers and the liberality of the "benefactors" [531] permit. This sarcophagus is often very large, and is richly gilt and painted in the panels, which are fringed with the usual mosaic of bits of mirror, coloured glass, and zinc. The paintings naturally represent religious subjects, usually scenes from the life of Shin Gautama; his famous meetings with the old man, the sick, the dead, and the monk; his departure at night from the magnificent court of King Thudawdana; his ascent to Tawadeintha, and the like. Rearing itself over the top of the sarcophagus is usually the figure of a nagā, recalling the pious dragon chief that sheltered the Lord Buddha from a flood of rain by coiling seven times round his body and expanding its hood as a covering.

Meanwhile, money is being steadily collected for the

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remainder of the rites, and as this comes in from the elders of the surrounding villages and the kappiyadayakas of neighbouring religious houses, the kyaungthagyi of the deceased's monastery sets about erecting an edifice like a thein, a "monastery of the dead." This is a building, more or less substantial, according to the sanctity of the departed, built of teak, and open all round, with the tapering ecclesiastical pya-that rising over it. Hither the coffin, with the sarcophagus, is carried and deposited on a dais in the centre, a slight railing serving to keep off wild animals. Over it a large white umbrella, with a deep paper-lace fringe, [531] is fixed, and round about hang a number of paintings, similar to those on the payaung-bông, some of them, however, representing the favourite subject of the different races of men as known to the artist—the swarthy Hindoo, the oblique-eyed Chinaman, the Kachin with his pig on his back, and the ghastly white-faced Englishman with dog and gun. Others are simply grotesque, and a few horrible, in their delineations of the horrors of hell. Nevertheless, they are all allowed to hang there, for though it is expressly stated that paintings are among the five species of gifts which are not meritorious (dancing is another), the ordinary layman thinks that the painting he gives must certainly be an exception. Here and there in this odd kind of mortuary chapel are also keinnaya, gay tinselled pasteboard figures of men with birds' lower extremities, manôttha keinnaya and nat keinnaya, the latter having the wings and gorgeous aspect of nat-déwas. Here the body lies in state, and there is a constant stream of pilgrims—some of them from far distant parts of the country—who come to say their religious sentences, make offerings of flowers and fruit as they would at the pagoda, and contribute what they can afford towards the remainder of the ceremony.

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The body remains till the required sum is collected. During that time numbers of festivals are celebrated at the ne'ban kyaung; bands of music play frequently, and the same people often make three or four different offerings. The lying in state usually lasts several months, sometimes considerably over a year, and it is to be noted that a pôngyi [796] byan never takes place during Lent.

● 792 764 349 At last all the funds are collected. An open space outside the town is cleared of jungle, and in the centre of it is erected the funeral pyre. This is constructed of bamboo matting, pasteboard brightly painted, and covered with the usual tinsel. It is, of course, in the form of the seven-roofed spire, the number of roofs, as some think, representing the number of heavens of nat-déwas. It is square up to a height of fifteen or twenty feet, where there is a platform, on which is placed a sort of cenotaph, resembling the payaung bông in construction and decoration. Above this towers up, fifty or sixty feet higher, the bamboo canopy. When this is ready, a fortunate day is selected by the elders of the town, for they have the management of the funeral rites, to the exclusion of the brethren of the yellow robe. This is announced all over the country-side by sound of gong, and when the appointed day arrives the people come flocking from every side, each quarter or village bringing its pya-thats and padetha-bins, the former similar in construction to the spire on the funeral pile, the "wishing trees" laden with a-hlu for the surviving brethren of the pôngyi who is to be cremated. The spires are arranged round about the great central one, to be burnt along with it; the padetha-bins are delivered at the kyaung.

792 764 There is always a great gathering round the monastery of the dead, where the sramana has been lying in state. The coffin is taken down with great ceremony, and placed on a strongly built, low four-wheeled car, surmounted by the eternal bamboo spire. Now comes a part of the ceremonial which always seems strangely absurd, not to say indecorous, to foreigners. Two, or sometimes four, stout rattan or coir ropes are fastened to the car, and forthwith all the able-bodied men present commence a frantically contested and uproarious tug-of-war. No sides whatever are selected, or numbers agreed upon. Reinforcements are always ready to back up a side which seems on the point of losing, and prematurely ending the struggle; and when a man loses his wind he leaves go his hold and sits down to have a rest. Sometimes the rope breaks, and then the progress of the funeral has to be suspended till a new one is procured and fastened on, for there is no rule as to a side abiding by its [illegible]. Sometimes the contest goes on for two or three

hours, and there are instances recorded where it was not 792 764 till the third day that a definite result was arrived at. The explanation is simple enough to a Burman, and it is surprising that it has not hitherto been given by any writer on Burma. It is a work of the greatest possible merit to drag a pôngyi's body to the funeral pyre, and this kutho falls to the share of those who win in the tug-of-war. The late Captain Forbes said that the explanation was that "the conquering village will get the better of their losing rivals in all sports, contests, or other matters during the year." But this is impossible where the winning side may be composed of men from a score of different villages in circles remote from one another. Besides, there are no championship meetings in Burma. It is to be noted also that during the lônswèthi it is usually only the payaung bông that is on the car. The actual coffin is brought down afterwards.

At last the coffin is brought to the pyre and hoisted up to its lofty platform, beneath which is stored a great quantity of combustible material: wood soaked in oil, pitch, and abundance of scented chips. Then nothing remains but to light it. When a layman is burnt, fire is set to the pile by the nearest relations with a box of Bryant and May's matches. But this is much too worldly a method for a member of the Thenga, and even the fire obtained by the [372] friction of a plug in a hollow bamboo—an ingenious amplification of the two dry sticks of a variety of barbarous tribes, common in most monasteries—would fail to satisfy the 764 dignity of a pôngyi. The pyre is lighted by rockets 792 fired from a distance. Scores of these dôn have been 389 prepared weeks beforehand, and many have been carried round triumphantly in procession by the people who have made them, a band of music preceding, and young men and girls dancing and singing of the potency of the powder and the accuracy of the aim which will gain for them the glory of setting fire to the pyre. Each rocket has a figure of some kind, a nat-déwa, a tiger, a hare, or a bilu attached to it. Some of them are of huge size, constructed of the stems of trees hollowed out and crammed full of combustibles, in which sulphur largely predominates. Many are eight or nine feet long and four or five in circumference, and secured

764 by iron hoops and rattan lashings. Up in Mandalay some
●772 are very much larger. These are let off at the funeral pile
389 from a distance of forty or fifty yards, the largest being mounted on go-carts, and many others guided by a rope fastened to the pya-that, the rocket sliding along by means of twisted cane loops. The great majority fail to have any other effect than making a great splutter and poisoning the air. A few refuse to budge at all; others topple off their carts and fizzle erratically on the grass. A pôngyi byan in the old days was frequently attended with loss of life. Some one, at any rate, of the bigger rockets was sure to fly off at a tangent and plunge into the crowd, where its weight, to say nothing of its fiery belchings, found one or more victims. Even now it is only by the strictest police regulations and a rigorous maintaining of order among the spectators, and system in the pyrotechnists, that like catastrophes do not happen. At last some lucky dôn plunges right into the inflammable materials piled below the bier, and in a few minutes the flames are leaping high above the topmost pinnacle of the spire. Roof after roof falls, setting fire to the offerings placed round the basement. The joints of bamboo explode with a noise like a pistol shot; the crowd cheer each separate occurrence, and when finally the central spire falls with a hiss, a shout rises from the multitude which suggests anything but death and pious observance. But here
[761] in the manôtthapyi all is changeful, sad, and unreal, and one more death brings but nearer to the final rest of Ne'ban.

When the last smouldering embers have cooled, the monastic brethren search for any pieces of bones that may remain, and these are carefully gathered up and buried somewhere near the pagoda. Sometimes, in the case of a particularly saintly man, they are pounded down, mixed into a paste with thitsi, and moulded into an image of the Buddha, which is stored up in the monastery. The custom followed in other Buddhist countries of erecting a shrine over the dead is, in accordance with the teachings of Shin Gautama, an honour but rarely accorded in Burma. In the Shan States they are commoner, but are rarely anything more elaborate than a stucco-covered block of bricks, about three feet high and pointed at the top.

Puberty and Adolescence. The Burmese view, in the village, is that one is an adult when one becomes physiologically mature. Upon reaching pubescence boys as well as girls are referred to by a term which means 'virgin.' The connotation is that the individual has now entered a period of life in which the dangers of temptation are especially great and in which correspondingly greater precautions are necessary. 881

A girl's first menstruation is believed to cleanse her system; frequently, such phenomena as eruption of the skin or sexually delinquent behavior preceding the first menstrual period are regarded as evidence that the 'blood is trying to flow.' Although the idea of uncleanliness is associated with menstruation, there is no segregation of the girl or any particular fear of contamination. So long as she conducts herself with propriety and modesty a girl is free to move in public at this time. 881 841

Ideally, the attainment of puberty is the time for the girl's ear-piercing ceremony, but in actual practice this often takes place as early as her seventh or eighth year -- if it occurs at all. There is a tendency for this ceremony to be omitted in Tadagale. Since it is a feast occasion involving considerable expense to her family, the trend is towards holding a single ceremony, at which several girls who are related will have their ears pierced. The initiate is dressed for this occasion in the traditional garb of the Burmese Court, and also wears a spired-helmet type of head dress. The villagers gather at the family house for the event. An elderly woman rubs an anaesthetic plant substance on the girl's ear lobes and pierces them with gold pins. These pins are left in the ears, bent back. Later, if larger holes are desired, rolled leaves may be inserted. The family presents gifts to the assembled guests; often these are conventionalized tokens, such as inscribed cigars or fans. 852

On the same occasion boys of approximately the same age may be initiated into the Buddhist monkhood. 881

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Boys' Initiation. For Burmese boys one of the most important events is initiation as a novice into the Buddhist monkhood. The traditional rite of shinbyu continues to be an important part of Burmese culture, in the urban as well as the rural setting. In the towns and cities, of course, it has been effected by the greater contact with western culture; the procession, for example, is likely to take place in automobiles rather than on horseback and on foot. Nevertheless, city-bred as well as rural Burmese feel it is very important for social as well as religious reasons that their sons be initiated; and everywhere the shinbyu involves large expenditures if not great sacrifices, requires the services of many people for its planning and carrying out, and is the occasion par excellence for joyous celebration as well as religious solemnity. 369 177

No two shinbyu ceremonies are the same in detail. The circumstances of the sponsoring families, the physical setting, the idiosyncrasies of individual monks all make for variation. Here we shall indicate the main features of the initiation ceremony as observed in Tadagale. 881 792

The ceremony proper is held on the open-sided ground floor of a wooden building, in the upper portion of which the monks and their pupils live. On the south side of this room is a platform raised about three feet above the ground, on which the monks sit during the proceedings. The room is decorated with various hangings, tapestries, and net curtains; the floor is covered with mats and carpets. Four tables front the platform, on which are placed various

881 objects used in the ceremony. The largest table is covered with a lace cloth
792 and on it stands an alabaster statue of the Buddha in a carved and decorated case. Before the figure of the Buddha are offerings of flowers, water, a candl bananas and coconuts, placed in a special bowl. There is also a dish of puffed rice, a carved gilt bowl, and three new bowls, the latter for the initiates. Each of the bowls contains some of the traditional articles required for a monk: beads, water cups, needle and thread, a straight razor. The carved, gilt begging bowl symbolizes the type used by the Buddha when he was on earth. The second table contains offerings of bananas and coconuts for the monks, and richly decorated gilt trays symbolic of the kind used in the days of the Burmes kings but now only for purposes of decoration. These will be carried by young girls in the procession. The third table contains robes and other gifts for the several monks who are invited to the ceremony. On the fourth table are mats and pillows for the initiates to use. They will be presented to the monks as gifts afterwards.

The elaborate preparations for the ceremony begin on the morning of the preceding day. Young girls go from house to house to borrow betelnut boxes, mats and carpets. In the afternoon a five piece orchestra, hired for the occasion, arrives at the place of the ceremony. It consists of two large drums, a small drum, a wind instrument, a xylophone, and cymbals. Now an elder makes
534 offerings to the spirits (nats). Bananas, a coconut and a lighted candle are placed on a tray. The elder holds the tray and recites invocations to the good and the evil spirits. The evil spirits are implored not to harass any person who participates in the ceremony, because it is a work of merit; the good spirits are reminded of the meritorious nature of the ceremony and asked to watch over and protect the proceedings. As the spirits are so addressed he swings the tray towards each member of the orchestra in turn, sometimes three, sometimes nine, and sometimes twelve times. The orchestra continues to play intermittently throughout the afternoon, evening, and into the night. Early in the evening the young men of the village come to the monastery with their own musical instruments -- mandolins, guitars, and violins -- and sing and dance into the early morning hours. The orchestra group remains at the monastery all night.

About midnight, a group of men who are responsible for cooking the food
252 set to work at this task. Women do not normally cook meals for an occasion as large as this; it is felt that the quantities of food required and the amount of labor involved is too much for them to manage. Around three hundred people are expected at a large shinbyu in the village. The cooks, about a dozen middle-aged men, sit around the fire they have lighted in a clearing a short distance
[522] from the monastery, drink tea, smoke, and make jokes. One man is introduced to the group as the 'all-Burma curry-cooking expert'; another is called 'No. 1 soup cook'; a third is dubbed 'best rice cook of the village.' During the night they prepare large quantities of boiled rice, pork curry, sour bean sprouts, fried fish paste, and a vegetable soup.

Early on the morning of the day for the ceremony, the initiates are
[292] dressed by friends of their families. After a bath, thanakha, an astringent-like paste made from ground tree bark and water, is applied to their faces. Then they don silk longyis and thin, white muslin jackets, beneath which they wear cotton vests. The longyi is very ornate, made of heavy silk, and is seamless. Gold chains and necklace, bracelets and rings are put on. The head dress is a fine silk cloth, wound round the head, and decorated with garlands of flowers.

Guests begin to arrive later in the morning at the site of the ceremony. 881
As each enters he is given a large cheroot by one of the girls who is posted at 792
the entrance to the room. The guests are seated on mats before the platform
for the monks and the tables of offerings described above. They are served tea
and pickled tea leaf while the orchestra entertains them.

The young men of the village arrive with their musical instruments, which 881
they will play during the procession to follow. They join the other guests,
taking seats on mats. The continued music of the orchestra forms a background 796
to the constant buzz of conversation among the assembled guests. 792

The initiates are carried into the room -- on this day their feet must not touch the ground -- and seated in chairs facing the monks' platform. A few persons spontaneously break into dance as the music goes on; more guests arrive; the horses which have been hired for the procession are brought to the scene and tethered nearby. Gradually the guests are summoned, in groups, to eat in a nearby building.

When all have had their meal, the procession is made ready. The young girls are given the carved trays and betelnut containers. The initiates make obeisance (shiko) with folded hands to the monks, as do all the guests. A monk chants prayers and blessings, the audience sings responses. The initiates now are carried from the room and seated on the horses, which will carry them around the village. A golden umbrella is opened and raised over each initiate, whose young male attendants hold it aloft, guide his horse, and carry him on their shoulders whenever he is required to dismount.

About mid-morning the procession leaves the monastery grounds, lead by the fathers of the initiates and young male relatives carrying the lacquer begging bowls which the initiates will use, followed by their mothers and female relatives bearing mats and pillows. Next follow the young girls, each carrying a decorated tray or container. After them come the initiates on horseback, led by their male attendants and followed by the young men's musical band which dances, sings, and plays as it moves along. The guests followed in their rear.

This procession wends it way along the road that links Tadagale with Kokine Road, and arrives at a spirit shrine. The guests make obeisance to the shrine and sit on the ground. The initiates are carried to the shrine by their attendants, to be shown to the spirits so that these beings will know of their work of merit and thus restrain their evil influences. The procession resumes, going along the main village path to the large Buddha shrine located about midway along this route. Here the boys are again carried from their horses to make obeisance, after which the procession sets out on the last part of the route, to the monastery again.

Now the initiates are lifted from their horses and carried, shoulder-high, three times around the monastery building, in clockwise direction. They are followed by their fathers, young male kin, their mothers and the young girls bearing the trays and containers.

As the third round of the building is completed and the group reaches the entrance to the room of the ceremony and tries to enter, they find themselves blocked by two women who hold a silk scarf across the entrance and loudly demand a huge sum of money as payment for permission to pass. The father of an initiate offers them, instead, five balls of candied puffed rice. Much good-

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natured bickering and banter takes place, in the midst of which the boys' attendants carry them off and hide them nearby, out of sight of the crowd. They demand ransom. Finally, the women who have blocked the entrance accept the offer of puffed rice balls, and the attendants who have hidden the initiates are persuaded to reduce the huge sum they have demanded to a token amount. The boys are returned, the crowd enters the ceremonial room, and the rite may proceed.

Sometime before noon the monks and the pupils of the monastery school have a meal, their last of the day, while the assembled guests sit in groups sipping iced soft drinks, smoking and gossiping.

About two o'clock gongs are struck to summon the monks to the ceremony. Now the initiates no longer wear jewelery or flowers, symbols of worldliness; and the silk scarves which earlier were worn on their heads are now worn across their chests, under one arm and over the other shoulder. The initiates sit on mats before the chair on which the chief officiating monk will be seated. A new earthenware pot is filled with water, flowers are placed in it, and a few yards of white thread are twined around the flowers. The pot is placed on the table to the right of the monk's seat. Its presence is supposed to counteract any evil influences by spirits or humans. It is a warning to evil spirits and enemies not to mar the proceedings.

When the monks arrive the orchestra again begins to play and candles are lighted. The several monks ascend the platform and sit according to rank. The chief officiating monk sits, as indicated, in a chair below the platform, facing the initiates and assembled guests.

The initiates repeat after an elder prayers and requests that they be allowed to enter the monkhood. The audience intones prayers for the remission of its sins, and the chief officiating monk recites the Five-Fold Path of Buddha. Further prayers by the monks are recited, in Pali, and then the chief monk preaches a sermon. His emphasis is very strong on the great glory brought to parents through the sponsorship of an initiation ceremony for a son. There are numerous allusions to incidents in the history of Buddhism to illustrate the importance of shinbyu and the even greater significance of entrance into the monkhood for life.

Following the sermon, the fathers of the initiates ascend the platform and place before each monk an offering of a new robe in an aluminum bowl.

At this point comes the ritual of water-pouring. The initiates' parents and nearest of kin slowly pour water, drop by drop, from bowls into cups which are set on the ground, as the chief monk recites prayers to call the attention of the earth spirit to the deed of merit being performed. It is believed that if they should be reincarnated in some lower form, they can be reminded by the earth spirit of their good deeds, and this will relieve them of their suffering and help to transform them into better reincarnated forms.

Now, threads are taken from the enclosure in which the initiates sat during the sermon. Their entrance into this enclosure, which followed their asking for admission to the monkhood, symbolized their acceptance into the order. These threads are now tied across the initiates' chests, over one shoulder and under the other.

The orchestra plays as the initiates depart for the adjoining building to 881
change into ordinary clothes, eat their last meal of the day, and bathe. Some
guests now leave; borrowed articles, such as plates, cups and mats are gathered 796
up for return to their owners, and eventually the orchestra departs. 792●

The initiates return to the front of the building in which the ceremony
took place. They sit on mats for the shaving of their heads. Two women hold a [302]
long piece of white cloth before them to catch the hair as several men proceed
to wet their heads and shave them clean with straight razors.

Once more the boys leave to bathe, then return and are seated before the chief monk. Their robes held in their hands before them, they recite prayers, give their robes to the monk, and ask him to dress them properly in the monkish garb.

Their robes donned, they squat before the monk and recite additional prayers, [195]
now following very carefully the special intonation appropriate to monks. The
ceremony proper is complete.

The following morning, early, a few relatives and close friends go to the
monastery. The monks, including the novices, are offered food by them. A monk
recites the Five-Fold Path, and then the ceremony of pouring water drop by drop
is performed. Names are given the initiates -- special monastic names which they [551]
will bear only for the duration of their novitiate.

In former times, and still today in the very remote villages of Burma, an 881
initiate might spend many months, possibly several years, in the monkhood.
Sometimes a boy would remain a monk for life. Today in Tadagale, as almost 792
everywhere, initiates spend only a token period of about one week in the monkhood. 178
During this time, they live the austere existence of the order, rising very early, spending long periods in prayer recitals, and abstaining from food after noon until the following morning. The short period of life as a novice is strongly in contrast with the easy-going, carefree childhood days that precede it. Some boys approach the time of their shinbyu with feelings of trepidation, and all are glad when the period spent in the monastery is over and they can return to the much less stern discipline of their parents.

Courtship and Marriage. Young people in the village find ample opportunities 584
to assess each other's manners, physical appearance, and personality, in the
company of others at feasts and various gatherings. If a young man and woman 831
are together apart from the company of others, people assume that sex relations are involved. In fact, such going together is spoken of as 'getting married.' Villagers find it hard to conceive of a young unmarried couple associating on a purely friendly, non-sexual basis; such behavior is regarded as contrary to nature. But however much it occurs, unchaperoned association is not approved, much less encouraged.

Once a pair have decided they want to marry, the boy will inform his 584
parents of his desire. They will already know, in a relatively small village such as Tadagale, something of the standing of the girl's family and of her dowry potentialities; in fact, as soon as they have sensed their son's interest in a particular girl, they will take steps to acquire this information. They will also ascertain whether acceptance by the girl's family is likely. Sometimes the approach to the girl's family is made directly; in other instances a female go-between will be employed. The latter is more likely when the girl's family

IV

RELIGION

The people of Tadagale are overwhelmingly Theravada Buddhist in faith. 779
The exceptions are the Indian minority, who are largely Hindus. There are 563
three Indians who profess Mohammedanism, and three Indo-Burmans and one Pakistani of like faith. Being Burmese and Buddhist are almost identified in the thinking of the majority, as evidenced by the fact that almost all replied 'Burmese Buddhist' to the question, 'To what people do you consider yourself to belong?'

In discussing the religious life of Tadagale, realism calls for emphasis upon actual religious beliefs and behavior, rather than any extended setting down of the formal theology of Buddhism. The latter has been done in any number of specialized works, to which the interested reader may refer. Here we shall refer to Buddhist precepts insofar as is necessary to illuminate religious beliefs and practices of the villagers.

The Five Precepts or Commandments. Almost all villagers know well the 779
fundamental Buddhist injunctions against the taking of life in any form, the 577
consumption of alcohol, illicit sexual activity, theft, and prevarication. These moral rules are, of course, sometimes breached. In Tadagale, the use of alcohol, sometimes to excess, is perhaps the most notable instance. The 'good Buddhist' does not, however, seem to experience feelings of guilt or pangs of conscience in such matters. Rather, the following of the moral precepts has instrumental value for him, in relation to his accumulation of merit and his reincarnation after death.

Merit. One's behavior throughout life determines one's store of merit, 779
and this, in turn, determines one's reincarnation after death. Morally proper behavior, such as the following of the five basic commandments of Buddhist 775
faith, is regarded as contributing to one's store of merit and thus enhancing one's state of reincarnation after death. Religious acts, such as making daily offerings of food to the monks, saying prayers, and attending the pagoda festivals on the important sacred days are likewise considered to increase one's merit. Breaking the moral precepts, irreligiousity, acting selfish or quarrelsome, detract from merit and accordingly tend to lower one's state in reincarnation.

Such is about the extent of the average villager's lay conception and 775
understanding of the moral code and the ideas of the afterlife in Buddhism.
He has little or no knowledge of the detailed concepts of reincarnation, with 779
its elaborate gradationary ladder leading from the four states of punishment
up to the ultimate achievement of Nirvana. Such theological learning is the 184
property of the monkhood and of a few laymen who spent more than the usual few years as pupils in the monastic school.

Functions of the Monks. The functions of the Buddhist monks in the 793
village may be conveniently classified as three-fold: formal education; officiation at certain rites; and providing personal advice and guidance to individuals.

With respect to formal education, the monks of four monasteries close 792
to the village conduct schools which are attended by a considerable number of 871

● 792 the small boys, as day pupils. Monastic education is a traditional part of
Burmese Buddhism, and almost all the men of Tadagale, whether reared in the
871 village or elsewhere, have attended monastic schools for varying lengths of time.

The monastic school curriculum includes elementary reading, writing and
792 arithmetic, rudiments of history and geography, heavily colored by Burmese
cosmology and folklore, and instruction in Buddhist precepts and proper conduct.
872 There is heavy emphasis upon proper conduct. Instruction takes the form of
mass recitation and rote memorization. Discipline is strict and the inattentive
876 pupil is kept alert, when necessary, by means of the rod. As indicated earlier,
many parents in the village favor the monastic as against the public school
because of the strict discipline and the emphasis upon conduct and religion.

Concerning the second function of the monks, officiation at certain
793 rites, it should be indicated that because Burmese Buddhism is not a congregational
type of religion, the monks are not called upon to officiate at
regular assemblies in any fashion akin to the role of the Christian minister.
The monks do, however, play an important part in the initiation of boys into
the monkhood; and sometimes take part in funeral rites.

The monk's function of giving advice and guidance stems from the fact that he is regarded, in the thinking of the villagers, not only as one to whom the greatest respect and deference is due by virtue of his dedication to his life to religion, but also as a living repository of wisdom and universal knowledge. He is a person to whom one may turn in time of uncertainty, doubt or stress for personal counsel. Problems relating to the conduct of one's children; concern over persistent lack of success in one's economic activities; or even matters of health may be taken to the monk. A great deal of the advice rendered by monks is formulaic, folkloristic and magical in nature. Particular monks tend to acquire reputations as being especially wise and helpful in particular kinds of problems.

Support of the Monks. The monastery buildings and the land on which
792 they stand are the property of the monastic order, held in perpetuity by grant
of the government, free of taxation.
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The monks are supported by the donations of the villagers. Every
morning a monk, accompanied by one or two monastic school pupils, passes
through the village to collect offerings of food. As he enters the compound
of each home a member of the household takes a pot of cooked rice, which has
been prepared for the morning meal, and places a few large spoonsful in the
monk's begging bowl. This minimum daily contribution of food is made by
every Buddhist household, without exception; in addition, many families send
[626] bowls of curry and rice to the monastery. Giving food to the monks is an
important act of merit to Burmese Buddhists. It is regarded as unthinkable
that any household would refuse. When the hypothetical case was posed of
such a deviant household, villagers agreed that such a family would be severely
criticized and shunned in the village.

The few other things that the monks require for their austere existence are given by villagers on the important ceremonial days of the year. These items include robes, soap, matches, begging bowls, water strainers and needles.

Duty Days. The Burmese calendar is a lunar one, and in each month there
796 are four days — duty or sabbath days — on which the villagers go to the monastery

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

795 own soul perfect. This is the first of all things, and
642 comes before any other consideration. Of the virtues
721 that only war can create and nourish this teaching
knows nothing. Be pure and kind-hearted, full of
charity and compassion, and so you may do good to
others. These are the vows the Buddhist monks
● [792] make, these are the vows they keep; and so it
happened that all that great organization was useless
to the patriot fighter, was worse than useless, for it
175 was against him. The whole spectacle of Burma in
722 those days, with the country seething with strife, and
792 the monks going about their business calmly as ever,
begging their bread from door to door, preaching of
peace, not war, of kindness, not hatred, of pity, not
revenge, was to most foreigners quite inexplicable.
They could not understand it. I remember a friend
of mine with whom I went through many experiences
speaking of it with scorn. He was a cavalry officer,
'the model of a light cavalry officer'; he had with
him a squadron of his regiment, and we were trying
to subdue a very troubled part of the country.

We were camping in a monastery, as we frequently did—a monastery on a hill near a high golden pagoda. The country all round was under the sway of a brigand leader, and sorely the villagers suffered at his hands now that he had leapt into unexpected power. The villages were half abandoned, the fields untilled, the people full of unrest; but the monasteries were as full of monks as ever; the gongs rang, as they ever did, their message through the quiet evening air; the little boys were taught there just the same; the trees were watered and the gardens swept as if there were no change

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

at all—as if the king were still on his golden throne, and the English had never come; as if war had never burst upon them. And to us, after the very different scenes we saw now and then, saw and acted in, these monks and their monasteries were difficult to understand. The religion of the Buddha thus professed was strange. 175 722 792

'What is the use,' said my friend, 'of this religion that we see so many signs of? Suppose these men had been Jews or Hindus or Mussulmans, it would have been a very different business, this war. These yellow-robed monks, instead of sitting in their monasteries, would have pervaded the country, preaching against us and organizing. No one organizes better than an ecclesiastic. We should have had them leading their men into action with sacred banners, and promising them heaven hereafter when they died. They would have made Ghazis of them. Any one of these is a religion worth having. But what is the use of Buddhism? What do these monks do? I never see them in a fight, never hear that they are doing anything to organize the people. It is, perhaps, as well for us that they do not. But what is the use of Buddhism?' 000

So, or somewhat like this, spoke my friend, speaking as a soldier. Each of us speaks from our own standpoint. He was a brilliant soldier, and a religion was to him a sword, a thing to fight with. That was one of the first uses of a religion. He knew nothing of Buddhism; he cared to know nothing, beyond whether it would fight. If so, it was a good religion in its way. If not, then not.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

after he had been elected by his fellow-monks. 642
The reason of this was as follows: All ecclesiastical 793
matters—I use the word 'ecclesiastical' because I 795
can find no other—were outside the jurisdiction of civil limits. By 'ecclesiastical' I mean such matters as referred to the ownership and habitation of monasteries, the building of pagodas and places of prayer, the discipline of the monkhood. Such questions were decided by ecclesiastical courts under the Thathanabaing.

Now, it was necessary sometimes, as may be understood, to enforce these decrees, and for that reason to apply to civil power. Therefore there must be a head of the monks acknowledged by the civil power as head, to make such applications as might be necessary in this, and perhaps some other such circumstances.

It became, therefore, the custom for the king to acknowledge by order the elect of the monks as Thathanabaing for all such purposes. That was all. The king did not appoint him at all.

Any such idea as a monk interfering in the affairs 642
of state, or expressing an opinion on war or law or 792
finance, would appear to the Burmese a negation of ●
their faith. They were never led away by the idea that good might come of such interference. This terrible snare has never caught their feet. They hold that a man's first duty is to his own soul. Never think that you can do good to others at the same time as you injure yourself, and the greatest good for your own heart is to learn that beyond all this turmoil and fret there is the Great Peace—so great that we can hardly understand it, and to reach

642 792 it you must fit yourself for it. The monk is he who is attempting to reach it, and he knows that he cannot do that by attempting to rule his fellow-man; that is probably the very worst thing he could do. And therefore the monkhood, powerful as they were, left all politics alone. I have never been able to hear of a single instance in which they even expressed an opinion either as a body or as individuals on any state matter.

It is true that, if a governor oppressed his people, the monks would remonstrate with him, or even, in the last extremity, with the king; they would plead with the king for clemency to conquered peoples, to rebels, to criminals; their voice was always on the side of mercy. As far as urging the greatest of all virtues upon governors and rulers alike, they may be said to have interfered with politics; but this is not what is usually understood by religion interfering in things of state. It seems to me we usually mean the reverse of this, for we are of late beginning to regard it with horror. The Burmese have always done so. They would think it a denial of all religion.

642 And so the only things worth noting about the government of the Burmese were its exceeding badness, and its disconnection with religion. That it would have been a much stronger government had it been able to enlist on its side all the power of the monkhood, none can doubt. It might even have been a better government; of that I am not sure. But that such a union would have meant the utter destruction of the religion, the debasing of the very soul of the people, no one who has tried to

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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621 626 All villages were not alike, of course, in their enforcement of good manners and good morals, but, still, in every village they were enforced more or less. The opinion of the people was very decided, and made itself felt, and the influence of the monastery without the gate was strong upon the people.

626 792 Yet the monks never interfered with village affairs. As they abstained from state government, so they did from local government. You never could imagine a Buddhist monk being a magistrate for his village, taking any part at all in municipal affairs. The same reasons that held them from affairs of the state held them from affairs of the commune. I need not repeat them. The monastery was outside the village, and the monk outside the community. I do not think he was ever consulted about any village matters. I know that, though I have many and many a time asked monks for their opinion to aid me in deciding little village disputes, I have never got an answer out of them. 'These are not our affairs,' they will answer always. 'Go to the people; they will tell you what you want.' Their influence is by example and precept, by teaching the laws of the great teacher, by living a life blameless before men, by preparing their souls for rest. It is a general influence, never a particular one. If anyone came to the monk for counsel, the monk would only repeat to him the sacred teaching, and leave him to apply it.

621 So each village managed its own affairs, untroubled by squire or priest, very little troubled by the state. That within their little means they did

565 and where each villager retires some time in his
741 life to learn the great wisdom. He will dig a well or build a bridge, or make a rest-house. And if the sum be very small indeed, then he will build, perhaps, a little house—a tiny little house—to hold two or three jars of water for travellers to drink. And he will keep the jars full of water, and put a little cocoanut-shell to act as cup.

741 The amount spent thus every year in charity is
742 enormous. The country is full of pagodas; you see them on every peak, on every ridge along the river. They stand there as do the castles of the robber barons on the Rhine, only with what another meaning! Near villages and towns there are clusters of them, great and small. The great pagoda in Rangoon is as tall as St. Paul's; I have seen many a one not three feet high—the offering of some poor old man to the Great Name, and everywhere there are monasteries. Every village has one, at least; most have two or three. A large village will have many. More would be built if there was anyone to live in them, so anxious is each man to do something for the monks. As it is, more are built than there is actual need for.

741 There are rest-houses everywhere. Far away
485 in the dense forests by the mountain-side you will find them, built in some little hollow by the roadside by someone who remembered his fellow-traveller. You cannot go five miles along any road without finding them. In villages they can be counted by tens, in towns by fifties. There are far more than are required.

In Burmese times such roads and bridges as

CHAPTER X

THE MONKHOOD—I

779 'Let his life be kindness, his conduct righteousness; then in the
792 fulness of gladness he will make an end of grief.'—*Dammapada.*

DURING his lifetime, that long lifetime that remained to him after he had found the light, Gaudama the Buddha gathered round him many disciples. They came to learn from his lips of that truth which he had found, and they remained near him to practise that life which alone can lead unto the Great Peace.

And from time to time, as occasion arose, the teacher laid down precepts and rules to assist those who desired to live as he did—precepts and rules designed to help his disciples in the right way. Thus there arose about him a brotherhood of those who were striving to purify their souls, and lead the higher life, and that brotherhood has lasted ever since, till you see in it the monkhood of to-day, for that is all that the monks are—a brotherhood of men who are trying to live as their great master lived, to purify their souls from the lust of life, to travel the road that reaches unto deliverance. Only that, nothing more.

16;Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

There is no idea of priesthood about it at all, 779
for by a priest we understand one who has received 792
from above some power, who is, as it were, a representative on earth of God. Priests, to our thinking, are those who have delegated to them some of that authority of which God is the fountain-head. They can absolve from sin, we think; they can accept into the faith; they can eject from it; they can exhort with authority; they can administer the sacraments of religion; they can speed the parting soul to God; they can damn the parting soul to hell. A priest is one who is clothed with much authority and holiness.

But in Buddhism there is not, there cannot be, anything of all this. The God who lies far beyond our ken has delegated His authority to no one. He works through everlasting laws. His will is manifested by unchangeable sequences. There is nothing hidden about His laws that requires exposition by His agents, nor any ceremonies necessary for acceptance into the faith. Buddhism is a free religion. No one holds the keys of a man's salvation but himself. Buddhism never dreams that anyone can save or damn you but yourself, and so a Buddhist monk is as far away from our ideas of a priest as can be. Nothing could be more abhorrent to Buddhism than any claim of authority, of power, from above, of holiness acquired except by the earnest effort of a man's own soul.

These monks, who are so common all through 792
Burma, whose monasteries are outside every village, who can be seen in every street in the early morning begging their bread, who educate the whole youth

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Burmese AP4

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of the country, are simply men who are striving after good.

This is a difficult thing for us to understand, for our minds are bent in another direction. A religion without a priesthood seems to us an impossibility, and yet here it is so. The whole idea and thing of a priesthood would be repugnant to Buddhism.

It is a wonderful thing to contemplate how this brotherhood has existed all these many centuries, how it has always gained the respect and admiration of the people, how it has always held in its hands the education of the children, and yet has never aspired to sacerdotalism. Think of the temptation resisted here. The temptation to interfere in government was great, the temptation to arrogate to themselves priestly powers is far, far greater. And yet it has been always resisted. This brotherhood of monks is to-day as it was twenty-three centuries ago—a community of men seeking for the truth.

Therefore, in considering these monks, we must dismiss from our minds any idea of priesthood, any idea of extra-human sanctity, of extra-human authority. We must never liken them in any way to our priests, or even to our friars. I use the word monk, because it is the nearest of any English word I can find, but even that is not quite correct. I have often found this difficulty. I do not like to use the Burmese terms if I can help it, for this reason, that strange terms and names confuse us. They seem to lift us into another world—a world of people differing from us, not in habits alone, but in mind and soul. It is a dividing partition. It is very difficult to read a book speaking of people

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792

under strange terms, and feel that they are flesh and blood with us, and therefore I have, if possible, always used an English word where I can come anywhere near the meaning, and in this case I think monk comes closest to what I mean. Hermits they are not, for they live always in communities by villages, and they do not seclude themselves from human intercourse. Priests they are not, ministers they are not, clergymen they are not; mendicants only half describes them, so I use the word monk as coming nearest to what I wish to say.

The monks, then, are those who are trying to follow the teaching of Gaudama the Buddha, to wean themselves from the world, 'who have turned their eyes towards heaven, where is the lake in which all passions shall be washed away.' They are members of a great community, who are governed by stringent regulations—the regulations laid down in the Wini for observance by all monks. When a man enters the monkhood, he makes four vows—that he will be pure from lust, from desire of property, from the taking of any life, from the assumption of any supernatural powers. Consider this last, how it disposes once and for all of any desire a monk may have towards mysticism, for this is what he is taught:

'No member of our community may ever arrogate to himself extraordinary gifts or supernatural perfection, or through vainglory give himself out to be a holy man: such, for instance, as to withdraw into solitary places on pretence of enjoying ecstasies like the Ariahs, and afterwards to presume to teach others the way to uncommon spiritual attainments. Sooner may the lofty palm-tree that has been cut

792 down become green again, than an elect guilty of such pride be restored to his holy station. Take care for yourself that you do not give way to such an excess.'

779 Is not this teaching the very reverse of that of
787 all other peoples and religions? Can you imagine
the religious teachers of any other religion being
789 warned to keep themselves free from visions? Are
792 not visions and trances, dreams and imaginations,
the very proof of holiness? But here it is not so. These are vain things, foolish imaginations, and he who would lead the pure life must put behind him all such things as mere dram-drinking of the soul.

This is a most wonderful thing, a religion that condemns all mysticisms. It stands alone here amongst all religions, pure from the tinsel of miracle, either past, or present, or to come. And yet this people is, like all young nations, given to superstition: its young men dream dreams, its girls see visions. There are interpreters of dreams, many of them, soothsayers of all kinds, people who will give you charms, and foretell events for you. Just as it was with us not long ago, the mystery, *what is* beyond the world, exercises a curious fascination over them. Everywhere you will meet with traces of it, and I have in another chapter told some of the principal phases of these. But the religion has kept itself pure. No hysteric visions, no madman's dreams, no clever conjurer's tricks, have ever shed a tawdry glory on the monkhood of the Buddha. Amid all the superstition round about them they have remained pure, as they have from passion and desire. Here in the far East, the very home, we

think, of the unnatural and superhuman, the very 779
cradle of the mysterious and the wonderful, is a 787
religion which condemns it all, and a monkhood 789
who follow their religion. Does not this out-miracle 792
any miracle?

With other faiths it is different: they hold out to those who follow their tenets and accept their ministry that in exchange for the worldly things which their followers renounce they shall receive other gifts, heavenly ones; they will be endued with power from above; they will have authority from on high; they will become the chosen messengers of God; they may even in their trances enter into His heaven, and see Him face to face.

Buddhism has nothing of all this to offer. A man must surrender all the world, with no immediate gain. There is only this: that if he struggle along in the path of righteousness, he will at length attain unto the Great Peace.

A monk who dreamed dreams, who said that the Buddha had appeared to him in a vision, who announced that he was able to prophesy, would be not exalted, but expelled. He would be deemed silly or mad; think of that—mad—for seeing visions, not holy at all! The boys would jeer at him; he would be turned out of his monastery.

A monk is he who observes purity and sanity of life. Hysteric dreams, the childishness of the mysterious, the insanity of the miraculous, are no part of that.

And so a monk has to put behind him everything that is called good in this life, and govern his body and his soul in strict temperance.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792

He must wear but yellow garments, ample and decent, but not beautiful; he must shave his head; he must have none but the most distant intercourse with women; he must beg his food daily in the streets; he must eat but twice, and then but a certain amount, and never after noon; he must take no interest in worldly affairs; he must own no property, must attend no plays or performances; 'he must eat, not to satisfy his appetite, but to keep his body alive; he must wear clothes, not from vanity, but from decency; he must live under a roof, not because of vainglory, but because the weather renders it necessary.' All his life is bounded by the very strictest poverty and purity.

Yet there is no austerity. A monk may not over-eat, but he must eat enough; he must not wear fine clothes, but he must be decent and comfortable; he must not have proud dwellings, but he should be sheltered from the weather.

There is no self-punishment in Buddhism. Did not the Buddha prove the futility of this long ago? The body must be kept in health, that the soul may not be hampered. And so the monks live a very healthy, very temperate life, eating and drinking just enough to keep the body in good health; that is the first thing, that is the very beginning of the pure life.

As he trains his body by careful treatment, so does he his soul. He must read the sacred books, he must meditate on the teachings of the great teacher, he must try by every means in his power to bring these truths home to himself, not as empty sayings, but as beliefs that are to be to him the very

16;Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

essence of all truth. He is not cut off from society. 792 There are other monks, and there are visitors, men and women. He may talk to them—he is no recluse; but he must not talk too much about worldly matters. He must be careful of his thoughts, that they do not lead him into wrong paths. His life is a life of self-culture.

Being no priest, he has few duties to others to perform; he is not called upon to interfere in the business of others. He does not visit the sick; he has no concern with births and marriages and deaths. On Sunday, and on certain other occasions, he may read the laws to the people, that is all. Of this I will speak in another chapter. It does not amount to a great demand upon his time. He is also the schoolmaster of the village, but this is aside entirely from his sacred profession. Certain duties he has, 792 however. 735 Every morning as the earliest sunlight comes upon the monastery spires, when the birds are still calling to the day, and the cool freshness of the morning still lies along the highways, you will see from every monastery the little procession come forth. First, perhaps, there will be two schoolboys with a gong slung on a bamboo between them, which they strike now and then. And behind them, in their yellow robes, their faces cast upon the ground, and the begging-bowls in their hands, follow the monks. Very slowly they pass along the streets, amid the girls hurrying to their stalls in the bazaar with baskets of fruit upon their heads, the housewives out to buy their day's requirements, the workman going to his work, the children running and laughing and falling in the dust. Everyone makes

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792
735

room for them as they go in slow and solemn procession, and from this house and that come forth women and children with a little rice that they have risen before daylight to cook, a little curry, a little fruit, to put into the bowls. Never is there any money given: a monk may not touch money, and his wants are very few. Presents of books, and so on, are made at other times; but in the morning only food is given.

The gifts are never acknowledged. The cover of the bowl is removed, and when the offering has been put in, it is replaced, and the monk moves on. And when they have made their accustomed round, they return, as they went, slowly to the monastery, their bowls full of food. I do not know that this food is always eaten by the monks. Frequently in large towns they are fed by rich men, who send daily a hot, fresh, well-cooked meal for each monk, and the collected alms are given to the poor, or to schoolboys, or to animals. But the begging round is never neglected, nor is it a form. It is a very real thing, as anyone who has seen them go knows. They must beg their food, and they do; it is part of the self-discipline that the law says is necessary to help the soul to humility. And the people give because it is a good thing to give alms. Even if they know the monks are fed besides, they will fill the bowls as the monks pass along. If the monks do not want it, there are the poor, there are the schoolboys, sons of the poorest of the people, who may often be in need of a meal; and if not, then there are the birds and the beasts. It is a good thing to give alms—good for yourself, I mean. So

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

that this daily procession does good in two ways: 792
it is good for the monk because he learns humility; 735
it is good for the people because they have thereby offered them a chance of giving a little alms. Even the poorest may be able to give his spoonful of rice. All is accepted. Think not a great gift is more acceptable than a little one. You must judge by the giver's heart.

At every feast, every rejoicing, the central feature is presents to the monks. If a man put his son into a monastery, if he make merry at a stroke of good fortune, if he wish to celebrate a mark of favour from government, the principal ceremony of the feast will be presents to monks. They must be presents such as the monks can accept; of course, that is understood.

Therefore a man enters a monastery simply for this: to keep his body in health by perfect moderation and careful conduct, and to prepare his soul for heaven by meditation. That is the meaning of it all.

If you see a grove of trees before you on your 792
ride, mangoes and tamarinds in clusters, with palms 346
nodding overhead, and great broad-leaved plantains and flowering shrubs below, you may be sure that there is a monastery, for it is one of the commands to the monks of the Buddha to live under the shade of lofty trees, and this command they always keep. They are most beautiful, many of these monasteries—great buildings of dark-brown teak, weather-stained, with two or three roofs one above the other, and at one end a spire tapering up until it ends in a gilded 'tee.' Many of the monasteries

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 346 531 are covered with carving along the façades and up the spires, scroll upon scroll of daintiest design, quaint groups of figures here and there, and on the gateways moulded dragons. All the carvings tell a story taken from the treasure-house of the nation's infancy, quaint tales of genii and fairy and wonderful adventure. Never, I think, do the carvings tell anything of the sacred life or teaching. The Burmese are not fond, as we are, of carving and painting scenes from sacred books. Perhaps they think the subject too holy for the hand of the craftsman, and so, with, as far as I know, but one exception in all Burma—a pagoda built by Indian architects long ago—you will look in vain for any sacred teaching in the carvings. But they are very beautiful, and their colour is so good, the deep rich brown of teak against the light green of the tamarinds, and the great leaves of the plantains all about. Within the monastery it will be all bare. However beautiful the building is without, no relaxation of his rules is allowed to the monk within. All is bare: only a few mats, perhaps, here and there on the plank floor, a hard wooden bed, a box or two of books.

778 At one end there will be sure to be the image of the teacher, wrought in alabaster. These are always one of three stereotyped designs; they are not works of art at all. The wealth of imagination and desire of beauty that finds its expression in the carved stories in the façades has no place here at all. It would be thought a sacrilege to attempt in any way to alter the time-honoured figures that have come down to us from long ago.

Over the head of the image there will be a white 778
umbrella, whence we have derived our haloes, and perhaps a lotus blossom in an earthen pot in front. That will be all. There is this very remarkable fact: of all the great names associated with the life of the Buddha, you never see any presentment at all.

The Buddha stands alone. Of Maya his mother, of Yathodaya his wife, of Rahoula his son, of his great disciple Thariputra, of his dearest disciple and brother Ananda, you see nothing. There are no saints in Buddhism at all, only the great teacher, he who saw the light. Surely this is a curious thing, that from the time of the prince to now, two thousand four hundred years, no one has arisen to be worthy of mention of record beside him. There is only one man holy to Buddhism — Gaudama the Buddha.

On one side of the monasteries there will be 792
many pagodas, tombs of the Buddha. They are 346
usually solid cones, topped with a gilded 'tee,' and 778
there are many of them. Each man will build one in his lifetime if he can. They are always white.

And so there is much colour about a monastery— the brown of the wood and the white of the pagoda, and tender green of the trees. The ground is always kept clean-swept and beaten and neat. And there is plenty of sound, too—the fairy music of little bells upon the pagoda-tops when the breeze moves, the cooing of the pigeons in the eaves, the voices of the schoolboys. Monastery land is sacred. No life may be taken there, no loud sounds, no noisy merriment, no abuse is permitted anywhere within

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 346 the fence. Monasteries are places of meditation and peace.

778 792 Of course, all monasteries are not great and beautiful buildings; many are but huts of bamboo and straw, but little better than the villager's hut. Some villages are so poor that they can afford but little for their holy men. But always there will be trees, always the ground will be swept, always the place will be respected just the same. And as soon as a good crop gives the village a little money, it will build a teak monastery, be sure of that.

792 574 186 Monasteries are free to all. Any stranger may walk into a monastery and receive shelter. The monks are always hospitable. I have myself lived, perhaps, a quarter of my life in Burma in monasteries, or in the rest-houses attached to them. We break all their laws: we ride and wear boots within the sacred enclosure; our servants kill fowls for our dinners there, where all life is protected; we treat these monks, these who are the honoured of the nation, much in the offhand, unceremonious way that we treat all Orientals; we often openly laugh at their religion. And yet they always receive us; they are often even glad to see us and talk to us. Very, very seldom do you meet with any return in kind for your contempt of their faith and habits. I have heard it said sometimes that some monks stand aloof, that they like to keep to themselves. If they should do so, can you wonder? Would any people, not firmly bound by their religion, put up with it all for a moment? If you went into a Mahommedan mosque in Delhi with your boots on, you would probably be killed. Yet

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792
574
186

we clump round the Shwe Dagon pagoda at our ease, and no one interferes. Do not suppose that it is because the Burman believes less than the Hindu or Mahommedan. It is because he believes more, because he is taught that submission and patience are strong Buddhist virtues, and that a man's conduct is an affair of his own soul. He is willing to believe that the Englishman's breaches of decorum are due to foreign manners, to the necessities of our life, to ignorance. But even if he supposed that we did these things out of sheer wantonness, it would make no difference. If the foreigner is dead to every feeling of respect, of courtesy, of sympathy, that is an affair of the foreigner's own heart. It is not for the monk to enforce upon strangers the respect and reverence due to purity, to courage, to the better things. Each man is responsible for himself, the foreigner no less than the Burman. If a foreigner have no respect for what is good, that is his own business. It can hurt no one but himself if he is blatant, ignorant, contemptuous. No one is insulted by it, or requires revenge for it. You might as well try and insult gravity by jeering at Newton and his pupils, as injure the laws of righteousness by jeering at the Buddha or his monks. And so you will see foreigners take all sorts of liberties in monasteries and pagodas, break every rule wantonly, and disregard everything the Buddhist holds holy, and yet very little notice will be taken openly. Burmans will have their own opinion of you, do have their own opinion of you, without a doubt; but because you are lost to all sense of decency,

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792
574
186
that is no reason why the Buddhist monk or layman should also lower himself by getting angry and resent it; and so you may walk into any monastery or rest-house and act as you think fit, and no one will interfere with you. Nay, if you even show a little courtesy to the monks, your hosts, they will be glad to talk to you and tell you of their lives and their desires. It is very seldom that a pleasant word or a jest will not bring the monks into forgetting all your offences, and talking to you freely and openly. I have had, I have still, many friends among the monkhood; I have been beholden to them for many kindnesses; I have found them always, peasants as they are, courteous and well-mannered. Nay, there are greater things than these.

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When my dear friend was murdered at the outbreak of the war, wantonly murdered by the soldiers of a brutal official, and his body drifted down the river, everyone afraid to bury it, for fear of the wrath of government, was it not at last tenderly and lovingly buried by the monks near whose monastery it floated ashore? Would all people have done this? Remember, he was one of those whose army was engaged in subduing the kingdom; whose army imprisoned the king, and had killed, and were killing, many, many hundreds of Burmans. 'We do not remember such things. All men are brothers to the dead.' They are brothers to the living, too. Is there not a great monastery near Kindat, built by an Englishman as a memorial to the monk who saved his life at peril of his own at that same time, who preserved him till help came?

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Can anyone ever tell when the influence of a 792
monk has been other than for pity or mercy? 779
Surely they believe their religion? I did not know how people could believe till I saw them.

Martyrdom—what is martyrdom, what is death, for your religion, compared to living within its commands? Death is easy; life it is that is difficult. Men have died for many things: love and hate, and religion and science, for patriotism and avarice, for self-conceit and sheer vanity, for all sorts of things, of value and of no value. Death proves nothing. Even a coward can die well. But a pure life is the outcome only of the purest religion, of the greatest belief, of the most magnificent courage. Those who can live like this can die, too, if need be—have done so often and often; that is but a little matter indeed. No Buddhist would consider that as a very great thing beside a holy life.

There is another difference between us. We think a good death hallows an evil life; no Buddhist would hear of this for a moment.

The reverence in which a monk—ay, even the 792
monk to-day who was but an ordinary man yester- 554
day—is held by the people is very great. All those 198
who address him do so kneeling. Even the king himself was lower than a monk, took a lower seat than a monk in the palace. He is addressed as 'Lord,' and those who address him are his disciples. Poor as he is, living on daily charity, without any power or authority of any kind, the greatest in the land would dismount and yield the road that he should pass. Such is the people's reverence for a holy life. Never was such voluntary homage

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

● 792 yielded to any as to these monks. There is a
554 special language for them, the ordinary language
198 of life being too low to be applied to their actions.
They do not sleep or eat or walk as do other men.

792 It seems strange to us, coming from our land where poverty is an offence, where the receipt of alms is a degradation, where the ideal is power, to see here all this reversed. The monks are the poorest of the poor, they are dependent on the people for their daily bread; for although lands may be given to a monastery—as a matter of fact, very few have any at all, and those only a few palm-trees—they have no power at all, either temporal or eternal; they are not very learned, and yet they are the most honoured of all people. Without any of the attributes which in our experience gather the love and honour of mankind, they are honoured above all men.

The Burman demands from the monk no assistance in heavenly affairs, no interference in worldly, only this, that he should live as becomes a follower of the great teacher. And because he does so live the Burman reverences him beyond all others. The king is feared, the wise man admired, perhaps envied, the rich man is respected, but the monk is honoured and loved. There is no one beside him in the heart of the people. If you would know what a Burman would be, see what a monk is: that is his ideal. But it is a very difficult ideal. The Burman is very fond of life, very full of life, delighting in the joy of existence, brimming over with vitality, with humour, with merriment. They are a young people, in the full flush of early nationhood. To them of all

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

people the restraints of a monk's life must be terrible and hard to maintain. And because it is so, because they all know how hard it is to do right, and because the monks do right, they honour them, and they know they deserve honour. Remember that all these people have been monks themselves at one time or other; they know how hard the rules are, they know how well they are observed. They are reverencing what they thoroughly understand; they have seen the monkhood from the inside; their reverence is the outcome of a very real knowledge.

Of the internal management of the monkhood I have but little to say. There is the Thathanabaing, who is the head of the community; there are under him Gaing-oks, who each have charge of a district; each Gaing-ok has an assistant, a 'prop,' called Gaing-dauk; and there are the heads of monasteries. The Thathanabaing is chosen by the heads of the monasteries, and appoints his Gaing-oks and Gaing-dauks. There is no complication about it. Usually any serious dispute is decided by a court of three or four heads of monasteries, presided over by the Gaing-ok. But note this: no monk can be tried by any ecclesiastical court without his consent. Each monastery is self-governing; no monk can be called to account by any Gaing-ok or Gaing-dauk unless he consent. The discipline is voluntary entirely. There are no punishments by law for disobedience of an ecclesiastical court. A monk cannot be unfrocked by his fellows.

Therefore, it would seem that there would be no check over abuses, that monks could do as they liked,

792 that irregularities could creep in, and that, in fact, there is nothing to prevent a monastery becoming a disgrace. This would be a great mistake. It must never be forgotten that monks are dependent on their village for everything—food and clothes, and
792 even the monastery itself. Do not imagine that the
626 villagers would allow their monks, their 'great glories,' to become a scandal to them. The supervision exercised by the people over their monks is most stringent. As long as the monks act as monks should, they are held in great honour, they are addressed by titles of great respect, they are supplied with all they want within the rules of the Wini, they are the glory of the village. But do you think a Burman would render this homage to a monk whom he could not respect, who did actions he should not? A monk is one who acts as a monk. Directly he breaks his laws, his holiness is gone. The villagers will have none such as he. They will hunt him out of the village, they will refuse him food, they will make him a byword, a scorn. I have known this to happen. If a monk's holiness be suspected, he must clear himself before a court, o leave that place quickly, lest worse befall him. It is impossible to conceive any supervision more close than this of the people over their monks, and so the breaches of any law by the monks are very rare—very rare indeed. You see, for one thing, that a monk never takes the vows for life. He takes them for six months, a year, two years, very often for five years; then, if he finds the life suit him, he continues. If he finds that he cannot live up to the standard required, he is free to go. There is no compulsion

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792
626

to stay, no stigma on going. As a matter of fact, very few monks there are but have left the monastery at one time or another. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of this safety valve. What with the certainty of detection and punishment from his people, and the knowledge that he can leave the monastery if he will at the end of his time without any reproach, a monk is almost always able to keep within his rules.

I have had for ten years a considerable experience of criminal law. I have tried hundreds of men for all sorts of offences; I have known of many hundreds more being tried, and the only cases where a monk was concerned that I can remember are these: three times a monk has been connected in a rebellion, once in a divorce case, once in another offence. This last case happened just as we annexed the country, and when our courts were not established. He was detected by the villagers, stripped of his robes, beaten, and hunted out of the place with every ignominy possible. There is only one opinion amongst all those who have tried to study the Buddhist monkhood—that their conduct is admirable. Do you suppose the people would reverence it as they do if it were corrupt? They know: they have seen it from the inside. It is not outside knowledge they have. And when it is understood that anyone can enter a monastery—thieves and robbers, murderers and sinners of every description, can enter, are even urged to enter monasteries, and try to live the holy life; and many of them do, either as a refuge against pursuit, or because they really repent—it will be conceded that the discipline

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 of the monks, if obtained in a different way to else-
626 where, is very effective.
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The more you study the monkhood, the more you see that this community is the outcome of the very heart of the people. It is a part of the people, not cut off from them, but of them; it is recruited in great numbers from all sorts and conditions of men. In every village and town—nearly every man has been a monk at one time or another—it is honoured alike by all; it is kept in the straight way, not only from the inherent righteousness of its teaching, but from the determination of the people to allow no stain to rest upon what they consider as their 'great glory.' This whole monkhood is founded on freedom. It is held together not by a strong organization, but by general consent. There is no mystery about it, there are no dark places here where the sunlight of inquiry may not come. The whole business is so simple that the very children can and do understand it. I shall have expressed myself very badly if I have not made it understood how absolutely voluntary this monkhood is, held together by no everlasting vows, restrained by no rigid discipline. It is simply the free outcome of the free beliefs of the people, as much a part of them as the fruit is of the tree. You could no more imagine grapes without a vine than a Buddhist monkhood that did not spring directly from, and depend entirely on, the people. It is the higher expression of their life.

114 In writing this account of the Burmese and their
792 religion, I have tried always to see with my own

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

114
792

eyes, to write my own thoughts without any reference to what anyone else may have thought or written. I have believed that whatever value may attach to any man's opinions consists in the fact that they are his opinions, and not a *réchauffé* of the thoughts of others, and therefore I have not even referred to, or quoted from, any other writer, preferring to write only what I have myself seen and thought. But I cannot end this chapter on the monks of the Buddha without a reference to what Bishop Bigandet has said on the same subject, for he is no observer prejudiced in favour of Buddhism, but the reverse. He was a bishop of the Church of Rome, believing always that his faith contained all truth, and that the Buddha was but a 'pretended saviour,' his teachings based on 'capital and revolting errors,' and marked with an 'inexplicable and deplorable eccentricity.' Bishop Bigandet was in no sympathy with Buddhism, but its avowed foe, desirous of undermining and destroying its influence over the hearts of men, and yet this is the way he ends his chapter:

'There is in that religious body—the monks—a latent principle of vitality that keeps it up and communicates to it an amount of strength and energy that has hitherto maintained it in the midst of wars, revolutionary and political, convulsions of all descriptions. Whether supported or not by the ruling power, it has remained always firm and unchanged. It is impossible to account satisfactorily for such a phenomenon, unless we find a clear and evident cause of such extraordinary vitality, a cause independent of ordinary occurrences of time and circumstances, a cause deeply rooted in the very soul of

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

114 792 the populations that exhibit before the observer this great and striking religious feature.

'That cause appears to be the strong religious sentiment, the firm faith, that pervades the mass of Buddhists. The laity admire and venerate the religious, and voluntarily and cheerfully contribute to their maintenance and welfare. From its ranks the religious body is constantly recruited. There is hardly a man that has not been a member of the fraternity for a certain period of time.

'Surely such a general and continued impulse could not last long unless it were maintained by a powerful religious connection.

'The members of the order preserve, at least exteriorly, the decorum of their profession. The rules and regulations are tolerably well observed; the grades of hierarchy are maintained with scrupulous exactitude. The life of the religious is one of restraint and perpetual control. He is denied all sorts of pleasures and diversions. How could such a system of self-denial ever be maintained, were it not for the belief which the Rahans have in the merits that they amass by following a course of life which, after all, is repugnant to Nature? It cannot be denied that human motives often influence both the laity and the religious, but, divested of faith and the sentiments supplied by even a false belief, their action could not produce in a lasting and persevering manner the extraordinary and striking fact that we witness in Buddhist countries.'

This monkhood is the proof of how the people believe. Has any religion ever had for twenty-four centuries such a proof as this?

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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CHAPTER XI

THE MONKHOOD—II

'The restrained in hand, restrained in foot, restrained in speech, of the greatest self-control. He whose delight is inward, who is tranquil and happy when alone—him they call "mendicant."'—*Acceptance into the Monkhood.*

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BESIDES being the ideal of the Buddhists, the monk is more: he is the schoolmaster of all the boys. It must be remembered that this is a thing aside from his monkhood. A monk need not necessarily teach; the aim and object of the monkhood is, as I have written in the last chapter, purity and abstraction from the world. If the monk acts as schoolmaster, that is a thing apart. And yet all monasteries are schools. The word in Burmese is the same; they are identified in popular speech and in popular opinion. All the monasteries are full of scholars, all the monks teach. I suppose much the same reasons have had influence here as in other nations: the desire of the parents that their children should learn religion in their childhood, the fact that the wisest and most honoured men entered the monkhood, the leisure of the monks giving them opportunity for such occupation. [196]

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Every man all through Burma has gone to a monastery school as a lad, has lived there with the monks, has learnt from them the elements of education and a knowledge of his faith. <It is an exception to find a Burman who cannot read and write.> Sometimes from lack of practice the art is lost in later manhood, but it has always been acquired. The education is not very deep—reading Burmese and writing; simple, very simple, arithmetic; a knowledge of the days and months, and a little geography, perhaps, and history—that is all. But of their religion they learn a great deal. They have to get by heart great portions of the sacred books, stories and teachings, and they have to learn many prayers. They have to recite them, too, as those who have lived much near monasteries know. Several times a day, at about nine o'clock at night, and again before dawn, you will hear the lads intoning clearly and loudly some of the sacred teachings. I have been awakened many a time in the early morning, before the dawn, before even the promise of the dawn in the eastern sky, by the children's voices intoning. And I have put aside my curtain and looked out from my rest-house and seen them in the dim starlight kneeling before the pagoda, the tomb of the great teacher, saying his laws. The light comes rapidly in this country: the sky reddens, the stars die quickly overhead, the first long beams of sunrise are trembling on the dewy bamboo feathers ere they have finished. It is one of the most beautiful sights imaginable to see monks and children kneeling on the bare ground, singing while the dawn comes.

The education in their religion is very good, very thorough, not only in precept, but in practice; for in the monastery you must live a holy life, as the monks live, even if you are but a schoolboy. 792 ● 871

But the secular education is limited. It is up to the standard of education amongst the people at large, but that is saying little. Beyond reading and writing and arithmetic it does not go. I have seen the little boys do arithmetic. They were adding sums, and they began, not as we would, on the right, but on the left. They added, say, the hundreds first; then they wrote on the slate the number of hundreds, and added up the tens. If it happened that the tens mounted up so as to add one or more to the hundreds, a little grimy finger would wipe out the hundreds already written and write in the correct numbers. It follows that if the units on being added up came to over ten, the tens must be corrected with the little grimy finger, first put in the mouth. Perhaps both tens and hundreds had to be written again. It will be seen that when you come to thousands and tens of thousands, a good deal of wiping out and re-writing may be required. A Burman is very bad at arithmetic; a villager will often write 133 as 100,303; he would almost as soon write 43 as 34; both figures are in each number, you see. 803

I never met a Burman who had any idea of cubic measurement, though land measurement they pick up very quickly. 804

I have said that the education in the monasteries is up to the average education of the people. That is so now. Whether when civilization progresses 792 871

● 792 and more education is required the monasteries will
871 be able to provide it, is another thing.

The education given now is mostly a means to an end: to learning the precepts of religion. Whether the monks will provide an education beyond such a want, I doubt. You see, a monk is by his vows, by the whole tenour of his life, apart from the world; too keen a search after knowledge, any kind of secular knowledge, would be a return to the things of this life, would, perhaps, re-kindle in him the desires that the whole meaning of his life is to annihilate. 'And after thou hast run over all things, what will it profit thee if thou hast neglected thyself?'

Besides, no knowledge, except mere theoretical knowledge, can be acquired without going about in the world. You cannot cut yourself off from the world and get knowledge of it. Yet the monk is apart from the world. It is true that Buddhism has no antagonism to science—nay, has every sympathy with, every attraction to, science. Buddhism will never try and block the progress of the truth, of light, secular or religious; but whether the monks will find it within their vows to provide that science, only time can prove. However it may be, it will not make any difference to the estimation in which the monks are held. They are not honoured for their wisdom—they often have but little; nor for their learning—they often have none at all; nor for their industry—they are never industrious; but because they are men trying to live—nay, succeeding in living—a life void of sin. Up till now the education given by the monks has met the wants

16₂Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 871 of the people; in future it will do so less and less. But a community that has lived through twenty centuries of change, and is now of the strength and vitality that the Buddhist monkhood is, can have nothing to fear from any such change. Schoolmasters, except religious and elementary, they may cease to be, perhaps; the pattern and ensample of purity and righteousness they will always remain.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

782 about to come upon them soon, realizing the emptiness of life, wishing for the Great Peace.

On Sundays the rest-house, like many others round the village, was crowded. Old men there would be, and one or two young men, a few [792] children, and many women. Early in the morning they would come, and a monk would come down from the monastery near by, and each one would vow, with the monk as witness, that he or she would spend the day in meditation and in holy thought, would banish all thought of evil, and be for the day at least holy. And then, the vow made, the devotee would go and sit in the rest-house and meditate. The village is not very near; the sounds come very softly through the trees, not enough to disturb the mind; only there is the sigh of the wind wandering amid the leaves, and the occasional cry of birds. Once before noon a meal will be eaten, either food brought with them cold, or a simple pot of rice boiled beside the rest-house, and there they will stay till the sun sets and darkness is gathering about the foot of the trees. There is no service [792] at all. The monk may come and read part of the sacred books—some of the Abidama, or a sermon from the Thoots—and perhaps sometimes he may expound a little; that is all. There is nothing akin to our ideas of worship. For consider what our service consists of: there is thanksgiving and praise, there is prayer, there is reading of the Bible, there is a sermon. Our thanksgiving and praise is rendered to God for things He has done, the pleasure that He has allowed us to enjoy, the punishment that He might have inflicted upon us and has not. Our

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was not known. You paid a rupee, and took the change in rice or other commodities.

The excitement of the great day of the full moon began in the morning, about ten o'clock, with the offerings to the monks. Outside the village gate there was a piece of straight road, dry and open, and on each side of this, in rows, were the people with their gifts; mostly they were eatables. You see that it is very difficult to find any variety of things to give a monk; he is very strictly limited in the things he is allowed to receive. Garments, yellow garments, curtains to partition off corners of the monasteries and keep away the draughts, sacred books and eatables—that is nearly all. But eatables allow a very wide range. A monk may accept and eat any food—not drink, of course—provided he eat but the one big meal a day before noon; and so most of the offerings were eatables. Each donor knelt there upon the road with his or her offerings in a tray in front. There was rice cooked in all sorts of shapes, ordinary rice for eating with curry, and the sweet purple rice, cooked in bamboos and coming out in sticks. There were vegetables, too, of very many kinds, and sugar and cakes and oil and honey, and many other such things. There were a few, very few, books, for they are very hard to get, being all in manuscript; and there were one or two tapestry curtains; but there were heaps of
796 flowers. I remember there was one girl whose
735 whole offering was a few orchid sprays, and a little,
792 very little, heap of common rice. She was so poor; her father and mother were dead, and she was not married. It was all she could give. She sat behind

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

her little offering, as did all the donors. And my 796
gift? Well, although an English official, I was not 735
then very much richer than the people about me, so 792
my gift must be small, too—a tin of biscuits, a tin or two of jam, a new pair of scissors. I did not sit behind them myself, but gave them to the headman to put with his offerings; for the monks were old friends of mine. Did I not live in one of their monasteries for over two months when we first came and camped there with a cavalry squadron? And if there is any merit in such little charity, as the Burmese say there is, why should I not gain it, too? The monks said my present was best of all, because it was so uncommon; and the biscuits, they said, though they did not taste of much while you were eating them, had a very pleasant after-taste that lasted a long time. They were like charity, maybe: that has a pleasant after-taste, too, they tell me.

When all the presents, with the donors behind them, dressed all in their best, were ready, the monks came. There were four monasteries near by, and the monks, perhaps in all thirty, old and young, monks and novices, came in one long procession, walking very slowly, with downcast eyes, between the rows of gifts and givers. They did not look at them at all. It is not proper for a monk to notice the gifts he receives; but schoolboys who came along behind attending on them, they saw and made remarks. Perhaps they saw the chance of some overflow of these good things coming their way. 'See,' one nudged the other; 'honey—what a lot! I can smell it, can't you?'

796 And, '*My mother!* what a lot of sweet rice! Who
735 gave that? Oh, I see old U Hman.' 'I wonder
792 what's in that tin box?' remarked one as he passed
my biscuits. 'I hope it's coming to our monastery,
any way.'

Thus the monks passed, paying no sort of attention, while the people knelt to them; and when the procession reached the end of the line of offerings, it went on without stopping, across the fields, the monks of each monastery going to their own place; and the givers of presents rose up and followed them, each carrying his or her gifts. And so they went across the fields till each little procession was lost to sight.

796 That was all the ceremony for the day, but at dusk the illuminations began. The little pagoda in the fields was lighted up nearly to its top with concentric rings of lamps till it blazed like a pyramid of flame, seen far across the night. All the people came there, and placed little offerings of flowers at the foot of the pagoda, or added each his candle to the big illumination.

The house of the headman of the village was lit
up with a few rows of lamps, and all the monasteries,
too, were lit. There were no restaurants—every-
[444] one was at home, you see—but there were one or
two little stalls, at which you could buy a cheroot,
or even perhaps a cup of vermicelli; and there was
796 a dance. It was only the village girls who had
535 been taught, partly by their own mothers, partly by
an old man, who knew something of the business.
They did not dance very well, perhaps; they were
none of them very beautiful; but what matter?

562 sing, nor play, nor paint. It must never be forgotten
517 that their civilization is relatively a thousand years behind ours. Accomplishments are part of the polish that a civilization gives, and this they have not yet reached. Accomplishments are also the means to fill up time otherwise unoccupied; but very few Burmese girls have any time on their hands. There is no leisured class, and there are very few girls who have not to help, in one way or another, at the upkeep of the household.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling tells of a young lady who played the banjo. He has been more fortunate than myself, for I have never heard of such a person.
562 They have no accomplishments at all. House-
356 keeping they have not very much of. Houses are small, and households also are small; and there is very little furniture; and as the cooking is all the same, there is not much to learn in that way. I fear, too, that their houses could not compete as models of neatness with any other nation. Tidiness is one of the last gifts of civilization. We now pride ourselves on our order; we forget how very recent an accomplishment it is. To them it will come with the other gifts of age, for it must never be forgotten that they are a very young people—only children, big children—learning very slowly the lessons of experience and knowledge.

● 792 When they are between eight and fourteen years
561 of age the boys become monks for a time, as every
792 boy must, and they have a great festival at their
[562] entrance into the monastery. Girls do not enter
304 nunneries, but they, too, have a great feast in their
561 honour. They have their ears bored. It is a
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562 715 cation is a very long process; but they have entered into the path, they have seen the light, if it be even a long way off yet. They know whither they would go. But women, see how few become nuns! Only those who have suffered such shipwreck in life that this world holds nothing more for them worth having become nuns. And they are very few. For a hundred monks there is not one nun. Women are too attached to their home, to their fathers, their husbands, their children, to enter into the holy life; and, therefore, how shall they come to heaven except they return as men? Our teacher says nothing about it, but we have eyes, and we can see.'

562 792 All this is true. Women have no desire for the holy life. They cannot tear themselves away from their home-life. If their passions are less than those of men, they have even less command over them than men have. Only the profoundest despair will drive a woman to a renunciation of the world. If on an average their lives are purer than those of men, they cannot rise to the heights to which men can. How many monks there are—how few nuns! Not one to a hundred.

562 782 Yet in some ways women are far more religious than men. If you go to the golden pagoda on the hilltop and count the people kneeling there doing honour to the teacher, you will find they are nearly all women. If you go to the rest-houses by the monastery, where the monks recite the law on Sundays, you will find that the congregations are nearly all women. If you visit the monastery without the gate you will see many visitors bringing little presents, and they will be women.

539 house, 'Give me a pinch of mustard-seed,' and it was
771 given readily. So with her treasure in her hand she
was going forth back to the Buddha full of delight,
761 when she remembered.

'Has ever anyone died in your household?' she asked, looking round wistfully.

The man answered 'Yes,' that death had been with them but recently. Who could this woman be, he thought, to ask such a question? And the woman went forth, the seed dropping from her careless fingers, for it was of no value. So she would try again and again, but it was always the same. Death had taken his tribute from all. Father or mother, son or brother, daughter or wife, there was always a gap somewhere, a vacant place beside the meal. From house to house throughout the city she went, till at last the new hope faded away, and she learned from the world, what she had not believed from the Buddha, that death and life are one.

● [772] So she returned, and she became a nun, poor soul! taking on her the two hundred and twenty-seven vows, which are so hard to keep that nowadays nuns keep but five of them.[1]

779 This is the teaching of the Buddha, that death is
inevitable; this is the consolation he offers, that all
761 men must know death; no one can escape death;

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[772] [1] These five vows are:

1. Not to take life.
2. To be honest.
3. To tell the truth.
4. To abstain from intoxicants.
5. Chastity.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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is not the 'I,' but only the result of its action, is too deep for him to hold. True, if a flame dies the effects that it has caused remain, and the flame is dead for ever. A new flame is a new flame. But the 'I' of man cannot die, he thinks; it lives and loves for all time.

He has made out of the teaching a new teaching that is very far from that of the Buddha, and the teaching is this: When a man dies his soul remains, his 'I' has only changed its habitation. Still it lives and breathes on earth, not the effect, but the soul itself. It is reborn among us, and it may even be recognized very often in its new abode.

And that we should never forget this, that we should never doubt that this is true, it has been so ordered that many can remember something of these former lives of theirs. This belief is not to a Burman a mere theory, but is as true as anything he can see. For does he not daily see people who know of their former lives? Nay, does he not himself, often vaguely, have glimpses of that former life of his? No man seems to be quite without it, but of course it is clearer to some than others. Just as we tell stories in the dusk of ghosts and second sight, so do they, when the day's work is over, gossip of stories of second birth; only that they believe in them far more than we do in ghosts.

A friend of mine put up for the night once at a monastery far away in the forest near a small village. He was travelling with an escort of mounted police, and there was no place else to sleep but in the monastery. The monk was, as usual, hospitable, and put what he had, bare house-room,

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16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

775 at the officer's disposal, and he and his men settled down for the night.

792 After dinner a fire was built on the ground, and the officer went and sat by it and talked to the 521 headman of the village and the monk. First they talked of the dacoits and of crops, unfailing subjects of interest, and gradually they drifted from one subject to another till the Englishman remarked about the monastery, that it was a very large and fine one for such a small secluded village to have built. The monastery was of the best and straightest teak, and must, he thought, have taken a very long time and a great deal of labour to build, for the teak must have been brought from very far away; and in explanation he was told a curious story.

792 It appeared that in the old days there used to be only a bamboo and grass monastery there, such a monastery as most jungle villages have; and the then monk was distressed at the smallness of his abode and the little accommodation there was for his school—a monastery is always a school. So one rainy reason he planted with great care a number of teak seedlings round about, and he watered them and cared for them. 'When they are grown up,' he would say, 'these teak-trees shall provide timber for a new and proper building; and I will myself return in another life, and with those trees will I build a monastery more worthy than this.' Teak-trees take a hundred years to reach a mature size, and while the trees were still but saplings the monk died, and another monk taught in his stead. And so it went on, and the years went by, and from time to time new monasteries of bamboo were built and

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

rebuilt, and the teak-trees grew bigger and bigger. 792 But the village grew smaller, for the times were troubled, and the village was far away in the forest. So it happened that at last the village found itself without a monk at all: the last monk was dead, and no one came to take his place.

It is a serious thing for a village to have no monk. To begin with, there is no one to teach the lads to read and write and do arithmetic; and there is no one to whom you can give offerings and thereby get merit, and there is no one to preach to you and tell you of the sacred teaching. So the village was in a bad way.

Then at last one evening, when the girls were all out at the well drawing water, they were surprised by the arrival of a monk walking in from the forest, weary with a long journey, footsore and hungry. The villagers received him with enthusiasm, fearing, however, that he was but passing through, and they furbished up the old monastery in a hurry for him to sleep in. But the curious thing was that the monk seemed to know it all. He knew the monastery and the path to it, and the ways about the village, and the names of the hills and the streams. It seemed, indeed, as if he must once have lived there in the village, and yet no one knew him or recognized his face, though he was but a young man still, and there were villagers who had lived there for seventy years. Next morning, instead of 792
going on his way, the monk came into the village 775
with his begging-bowl, as monks do, and went round and collected his food for the day; and in the evening, when the villagers went to see him at the

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 775 monastery, he told them he was going to stay. He recalled to them the monk who had planted the teak-trees, and how he had said that when the trees were grown he would return. 'I,' said the young monk, 'am he that planted these trees. Lo, they are grown up, and I am returned, and now we will build a monastery as I said.'

When the villagers, doubting, questioned him, and old men came and talked to him of traditions of long-past days, he answered as one who knew all. He told them he had been born and educated far away in the South, and had grown up not knowing who he had been; and that he had entered a monastery, and in time became a Pongyi. The remembrance came to him, he went on, in a dream of how he had planted the trees and had promised to return to that village far away in the forest.

The very next day he had started, and travelled day after day and week upon week, till at length he had arrived, as they saw. So the villagers were convinced, and they set to work and cut down the great boles, and built the monastery such as my friend saw. And the monk lived there all his life, and taught the children, and preached the marvellous teaching of the great Buddha, till at length his time came again and he returned; for of monks it is not said that they die, but that they return.

775 This is the common belief of the people. Into this has the mystery of Dharma turned, in the thoughts of the Burmese Buddhists, for no one can believe the incomprehensible. A man has a soul, and it passes from life to life, as a traveller from inn to inn, till at length it is ended in heaven. But not

16;Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

attained Nirvana, love and hate, desire and repulsion, will have fallen from us for ever. 828

Meanwhile, in each life, we are obliged to endure 792 ● the affections of the body into which we may be 828 born. It is the first duty of a monk, of him who is trying to lead the purer life, to kill all these affections, or rather to blend them into one great compassion to all the world alike. 'Gayūna,' compassion, that is the only passion that will be left to us. So say the learned.

I met a little girl not long ago, a wee little maiden 775 about seven years old, and she told me all about her former life when she was a man. Her name was Maung Mon, she said, and she used to work the dolls in a travelling marionette show. It was through her knowledge and partiality for marionettes that it was first suspected, her parents told me, whom she had been in her former life. She could even as a sucking-child manipulate the strings of a marionette-doll. But the actual discovery came when she was about four years old, and she recognized a certain marionette booth and dolls as her own. She knew all about them, knew the name of each doll, and even some of the words they used to say in the plays. 'I was married four times,' she told me. 'Two wives died, one I divorced; one was living when I died, and is living still. I loved her very much indeed. The one I divorced was a dreadful woman. See,' pointing to a scar on her shoulder, 'this was given me once in a quarrel. She took up a chopper and cut me like this. Then I divorced her. She had a dreadful temper.'

It was immensely quaint to hear this little thing

[792] 722 361 / 792 361 apparently meaningful locations would be the huts of the PHON-GYIS located on the peripheries of the camp on local promontories.

The new PHON-GYI KYAUNG near the entrance of the camp was built by others, not by the refugees. The one at the back, on the other hand, was built by contributions among the refugees themselves. One PHON-GYI and one small boy reside here. The PHON-Gyi from the new KYAUNG comes for HSOON (food giver to begging monks) once in a while. A third PHON-GYI KYAUNG at the far rear also was in existance before U Myaing's arrival at camp. Here also resides one PHON-GYI and one small boy.

723 362 U Myaing came by himself to camp and took possession of the place he now lives in. The camp-head assigned the place to him. When they first arrived in Rangoon they had to rent a room at HPA-HSA-PA-LA-KWETTHIT (an area of huts organised by the Anti-facists Peoples Freedom League, the political party now in power) for a period of 2½ months at Rs. 17/8 per month. This was because they did not know of the refugee camp. They learnt of its existence just as their money ran out, and they shifted over.

U Myaing is of opinion that since he is installed in these quarters no other family will come to put up there, but admits that if they did, he would not have any right to drive them out, since he does not own the place. He is a comparative latecomer to the camp. Other families have been here for nearly two years now, while U Myaing arrived only 10 months ago. The extensions to the eaves of the roof were made by U Myaing. The condition of the camp when he came was very much the same as it is now. Only two additional huts and one PHONGYI KYAUNG have been erected since. He considers that his quarters are slightly better off than those of others in that there is less bustle and confusion in the buildings.

722 342 The quarters assigned to U Myaing are formed by the extension of the eaves of a rectangular house. The house, which measures 60 feet long by 20 feet wide has bamboo matwalls about 10 feet high, is floored with stone paves and has six windows 3 feet square on the long sides. There is a door 3 feet wide at one end. The roof is gabled with a ridge pole from which 8 rafters sixteen feet long are attached. The extensions of the foof consist of thatched leaves on

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day on the calendar but the second phongyi decided to embark anyway. Both phongyis were lost when the boat sank that day.

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The revered position of phongyis is open to all regardless of birth or position. It is felt that some take up the robe because they are unsuccessful in life, or wish an "easy living" - but perhaps this attitude is one of modern sophisticates. Certainly the dominant position of the brotherhood is unchallenged. Occasionally differences arise between the headman and the phongyis of a village. But the phongyis invariably prevail. Offending laymen can be "deprived the gate of heaven" by phongyis refusing to accept HSOON, alms, from th This is called inverting the begging bowl THA-BEIT-MAUK-TAI (Begging bowl-upturn) and is the current phrase for any sort of a "strike".

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Some unprincipalled phongyis have sought to enrich themselves by accepting gifts of land or other property, or by selling gifts for money to traders. When they leave the brotherhood and become laymen again this property become theirs. Such occurences appear to be rare and are controlled by stipulations of the givers. For example a owner would hesitate to give paddy land to a suspected phongyi but might agree to giving the crops while retaining title.

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The government or administrative class is looked up to with great respect - in part a carry over from the days of royalty, in part an attitude towards power and influence. However, while the villager today may not know the details of the new constitution he knows there is a "code" wherein he can secure impartial justice.

304 The custom is dying out today; but, in the villages, the teen-age boy
562 frequently, on the encouragement of their family submit to the tattoo-
178 ing of a small area on the thigh. These decorations seen when the longyis are wrapped high were regarded as essential and those without them were openly criticised.

[751] A second type of tattooing consisting of potent symbols were, as still are, placed on the inner arm, back, or high forehead as a means of magical protection against harm. Snake, knife, cudgel and bullet proof motifs are common. Young girls frequently have the inner arm tattooed with such a charm.

838 Homo-sexuals are known as MEIN MA SHA ("woman-half") and are
826 recognised by their effeminate gestures, "pretty" looks and clothing. They frequently wear THANAKHA face powder, tie their longyis in a simple tucked-in fold, and wear jewelry like the women. They are rare in villages but have banded together into a society in Rangoon. They appear to be tolerated but are scorned.

It is beleived that individuals known as MIN-TEE-PON-LAIN-HSEH-PON-LAIN ("Female sex- 2 sexes") exist . These persons are supposed to be alternately a man for one month, and a woman for the following
[775] month in a complete process of transformation. Both the MEIN MA SHA and these individuals result from illicit seduction activities in a previous existence - the MEIN MA SHA being the less sinful of the two

•792 The PONGYI dress consist of orange cotton cloth - one garment
291 being a longyi with a rolled tie at the waist; the other a wide band
293 drapped as a robe. When begging the PONGYIS have a special arrangement of the robe which wraps the left arm and covers the neck region. The nuns wear a robe garment over a long sleeved KINGYI jacket of the same colour. They are frequently seen with a scarf folded on the head. Both orders carry orange-cloth (lacquered) parasols on long bamboo shafts, a string of beads and large palm leaf fans. The Pongyis carry leather bags suspended on a shoulder strap for personal effects. PONGYI slippers have a square toe, are made of stiff leather with reinforced soles.

[887] Religious women (including old women) wear chocolate coloured HTAMEINS, KINGYIS and carry a FUMA (a narrow scarf 4 of 5 feet in

length) draped over one shoulder. The PUNA, part of the scarf, still 792 ●
draped, is placed on front of the worshipping woman for her head and 291
hands as she bows. The beads, a string about 2 feet long made of black 293
lacquer or of red or white beads about ½ inch in diametre are called [788]
SEIK-PA-DEE (count-beads). They are worn about the neck when not in
use, and are "counted" by the fingers of one hand. Each bead, thus
counted calls to the worshipper's mind a vision of Buddha as she says
ARA HANN (God) in a low voice. While in this dress women do not
decorate their hair with flowers or wear jewelry or cosmetiques as
such would be unseemly.

The older men and other religious men (who are gathering alms as 888
members of Buddhist lay societies) wear a loose white robe over a 779
white jacket, white head band, praying bead necklace, and a chocolate 575
coloured scarf draped over one shoulder. The general public must 291
wear their very best clothes for religious festivals but the women do
not use cosmetiques. "Rangoon Sabbath" is the term applied to the [369]
less strict observations of the town people who may appear with a [779]
little THANAKA or other cosmetiques. The marriage dress of the bride [292]
is an older form of costume involving use of a long split skirt with [585]
out-flaring jackets.

The hair styles are important and denote age and sex. Children 302
of both sexes wear their hair in a knot at the top of the head with 177
a fringe of short hair like a bowl below. The older men's style was 369
long hair knotted on one side in the back of the head; except in
villages this has been superseded by the western short crop ranging
from a long "Pompador" to short "crew cuts" - the latter being rarer
and more modern. Old men wear very short cropped hair or are shaven -
as the Pongyis and nuns. Maidens wear their hair in elaborately
woven tresses - earlier on top of the head in a disc-whorl - now in
chain braids at the back of the head. False switches of hair are
commonly used. Flowers are used as decoration on all occasions. The
usual style for married ladies is a knot at the back of the head
wound around a rectangular comb of wood, (common) tortoise shell, ivory
or gold. Older and married women sometimes appear in an ancient
ceremonial style consisting of the hair wrapped around a fiber cylinder

(arm-tie) charm consisting of a small metal tube bound about the upper 751
arm or neck and containing an inscription written by a pongyi on silver
or aluminum foil. Once a year, after new years (in March), a PAYA- 775
YUDA (prayer-recite) ceremony is held. At this time pongyis recite 792●
the precepts of Buddha for the benefit of the ghosts - who "become 755
hot and run away". Younger people, especially children, are suscepti-
ble to being possessed by ghosts. At this time they "throw fits" and
are uncontrolable. Under the supervision of a pongyi the ghost is
cast out by means of threats and beatings administered to the person
of the possessed one. Beatings are severe and continuous often
lasting an hour, until the ghost says he is "afraid" and departs.
The possessed one, thus cured, does not later complain of rough treat-
ment since this is borne by the invading ghost. Perhaps this relates
to the less formulated, "nameless horrors" of unseen and unaccountable
forces that cause otherwise unexplainable events - which concept per-
vades much of western thought to this day.

A major difference between nats and ghosts is that ghosts cause 775
only harm while nats are ordinarily beneficial in the manner described 776
above. Ghosts may also be controlled for evil purposes against 789
individuals in a variety of black magic. The specialists in black 791
magic are PAH-YOH-GA-SAYA (influence masters) of black magic or "lower
- "upper root" (heaven) masters combat the "lower root evil"
root", (hell-evil), who administer the evil influence. Witches also
have personal magic powers that allow them to cause harm to an indivi-
dual by introducing foreign matter such as lumps of meat, hair balls,
into the body of the victim. It is never known for sure who the witches
are but old women of peculiar habits, and especially of the fishermen's [463]
group, are suspected. Such individuals are considered generally
molivalent and special precautions are needed to avoid offending them.
The influence masters, however, are well known and receive gift-fees
for performing services either of causing or controlling black magic
influences. Both groups, but especially the influence masters of the
lower root control ghosts for their purposes.

A major means of securing control of a ghost or "ghost-rearing" 775
is to get the finger bone of a recently deceased person who died a 789
"raw death". Incantations said over the bone insures the obedience of

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remaining huts. They have lists of the people in their charge. Maung Nyunt and Aung Gyi are under the school-master, who is the most important and influential man of all. These people have to see to the DHANI thatch roof, the bamboo, etc., and if there are any repairs needed they get together, estimate the cost , and then go to the government authorities. U Myaing does not know which office they go to.

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The phongyis resident in the camp do not participate in the secular life of the camp, beyond giving the SILAS and coming occasionally for HSOON. In Pathwe village there were small boys whom they taught - thirty or forty of them, but in camp they do not help to educate the young. People go to these phongyis in camp on holy days, to take the SILAS. They do not even preach to the laity. This U Myaing thinks to be due to the fact that they do not know how to, being themselves refugees from country villages.

796
On the 8th and 15th day of the waxing moon and the 8th and 15th day of the waning moon, the four holy days of the month, Daw Aw Zar goes to the Shwe Dagon to say her prayers. U Myaing cannot do likewise because he has to go to work.

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U Myaing has very little dealing with the government. They do not come for taxes, and in fact even have to provide the refugees with items of food and apparel. The people in the camp are not members of a closely knit organisation. They are made up of workers and families all thrown together by the exigencies of the political situation. The three mentioned above are the only ones in the whole camp who have charge of the camp welfare. They take the responsibility for disposing of the bucket sewage and the dirt accumulated in and around the camp. They arrange for government sweepers to come for these. There have been no fire drills or any such exercise held in the camp.

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[435]
In Rangoon the family has few entertainments. There was once a government film show screened in the camp, and the other night Ma Khin Myein went with some friends to a nearby pagoda to see a lantern slide show of Buddha's Relics. They have never seen a modern Burmese play or PYAZAT. As Daw Aw Zar expressed it, "How can we go and see one when the charge for admission is a rupee for an adult and 8 annas for a child."

536* of the interlude were religious feast days, and out of respect for those
779 occasions, the story had to be religious. Moreover, the interlude had
to contend with the *Hawsa* or dramatic recitation by one person of a
178 story, which was a rival in popularity; and all *Hawsas* were based on
[538] religious stories. However, the most important reason why the interlude had to depend again on the *Jatakas* for its stories was the great popularity of the works of U Awbatha.

538 Shin U Awbatha was a monk who lived during the reigns of
178 Bodawpaya (1782–1819) and Bagyidaw (1819–37). He was a product
195 of the age of learning. Famed for his piety, religious learning, and
knowledge of Sanskrit and Pali, he chose, like his contemporaries, to
●[192] write in Burmese, and he enriched Burmese prose. The prose before him had been much neglected. The scholars were more interested in verse. When they did write prose, they never succeeded in forgetting that they were essentially verse-writers, and they used rhymed, balanced, and measured phrases. They used too rich an imagery. They broke into verse when they wanted to express any intensity of feeling. Often they introduced Pali words into their writings when there were more suitable Burmese ones. Burmese prose before U Awbatha was in the same position as English prose before Dryden. U Awbatha introduced a prose which was expressive and clear, simple yet effective. It was used to convey varieties of feelings and emotions, but it was always kept restrained and was never allowed to lose its
[871] clearness. His works are still well known and popular. The importance of U Awbatha to Burmese language and literature can be judged from the fact that from the junior forms to the Honours course in Burmese at Rangoon University, his books are textbooks.[1]

538 There are hundreds of Birth Stories, but the most important
178 are the *Ten Big Jatakas*. They are much longer than the rest. U Awbatha wrote Burmese prose versions of the eight longest of those. He followed closely the Pali originals as far as the incidents of the stories were concerned, but he portrayed character in detail, and made the characters more lifelike and therefore more interesting. The story was very well retold, but he was equally masterful in the portrayal of character and in his understanding of human psychology.

He wrote his first *Jataka* in 1785 when Burmese arms were flashing victorious in Assam and Manipur, but vainglorious references to contemporary events found no place in his works. In the peaceful

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[1] A short account of U Awbatha is given in G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 269.

CHAPTER IV

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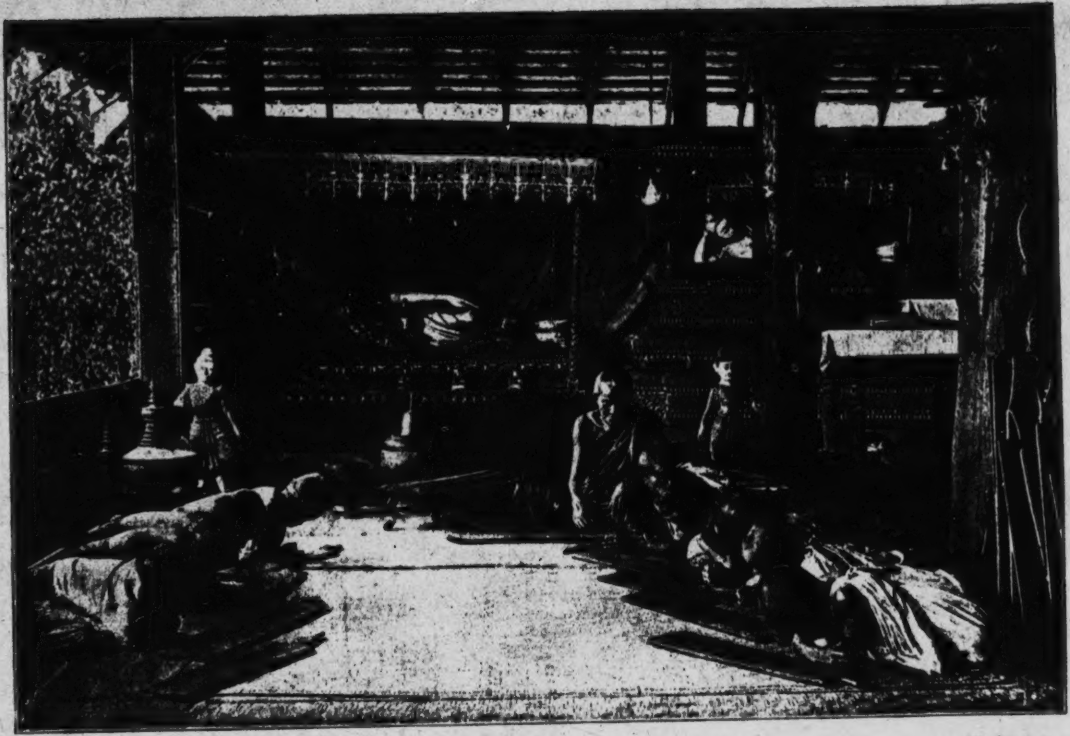
U PON NYA

1. The Life of U Pon Nya

536* U Pon Nya was born about the year 1807. His father was a
644 minor nobleman at the court of Prince Tharrawaddy, a younger
●792 brother of King Bagyidaw (who lost the war against the British), and
the young boy was brought up under the patronage of the prince.
538 He was a precocious child and was placed under the tutorship of the
most learned monk of the day. The prince rebelled against his
brother and became king in 1837. U Pon Nya, in the meantime, had
become a monk. During the rebellion, his father fell fighting for the
prince, and the new king wanted U Pon Nya to take his father's
office, but the future dramatist preferred to remain a monk. King
Tharrawaddy continued to consider himself as godfather to U Pon
Nya, who therefore was in constant contact with the court. On the
death of that king, his son Pagan ascended the throne, and U Pon
Nya left the capital for the little town of Salè, where he began to
compose literary essays in about 1847. His essays and lyrics became
immensely popular, and he came to be known all over the country as
the 'Master of Salè', by which name he is more commonly referred
to. In 1850 he became a layman again, and was appointed a court
poet at the court of Prince Kanaung, a brother of the reigning
king, Pagan. In 1851 Burma went to war again with the British
and lost some more territory. Prince Kanaung and his other
brother, Mindon, rebelled against the half-mad king. Mindon
became the new king and made peace with the British. Kanaung
became the crown prince, and U Pon Nya his official poet. He was
then already recognized by the nation as the foremost poet,
scholar and essayist of the day. He wrote astrological works and
[787] won further fame as an astrologer. He believed that he was liable
to die on the scaffold and asked for a proclamation by the king
exempting him from punishment by death; otherwise he begged to
leave the court for the monastery. The required proclamation was
made.



22. INTERIOR OF VILLAGE MONASTIC SCHOOL.

[*To face p.* 10.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

Corr. P. 10

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25. GAME OF SITOPPYIT.

Burman average stands midway between those of Ireland and Austria on the one hand, and Italy and Spain on the other. (Report of the Census of 1891.)

The boys at the monastery-school (*kyaung-tha*) do the domestic work—sweep the floors and enclosures, attend upon the recluses, and help in collecting the daily food. Some scholars live at the *kyaung*, others have the morning meal there, others again have their meals at home. The recluse exacts no deference from his scholar, but nevertheless receives from all lay persons a spontaneous homage identical with that accorded to royal personages. In the *kyaung* the lads acquire the good breeding of their country, for it is among the recluses that the élite of the race is to be sought. In the stage next to be described, the lad completes this training, by himself sharing in the deference paid to the yellow robe, which he assumes for a season as novice. The monastery-schools are open all the year, but have a large attendance only in the rainy season or *wd*.

871 Besides the monastic public schools there are private schools kept by laymen and occasionally also by women, in which girls as well as boys are taught. The subjects and methods are the same, but more time is given to arithmetic. The rules of thumb of the Indian *bedin* are being superseded by modern arithmetic, by help of the vernacular manual prepared by the missionary
[875] Stilson. A small fee is paid the lay teacher in money or in kind. Out of
[855] hours, the lay-school pupils are of use at their homes,
[524] minding their little brothers and sisters.

The training begun in youth is never broken off.
871 Study is a chief occupa-
875 tion of middle and advanced age. The teacher—*saya*—clerical or lay, is reverenced,

26. CYCLE RACE.

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29. NOVICES MAKING THE ROUND FOR DAILY FOOD (P. 18).

CHAPTER III

ADOLESCENCE

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[292]

30. THAMI-U ARRAYED FOR HER FETE.

BETWEEN the ages of ten and sixteen Burman lads enter upon the monastic novitiate, an occasion celebrated with a brilliant fête. The adoption of a religious life by girls is much less general, even for the short time it is embraced by the youths; and when it is adopted, there is no ceremony. But a holiday answering to that of the boy's novitiate is held in honour of the girl, especially when she is the first-born child—*thamí-u*. In her case the ear-boring ceremony, if not the piercing itself, is deferred to the age of ten or twelve. The child, equipped in royal attire, or an imitation of it, and wearing a queen's crown (*sibôn*), is the centre of a great gathering of relatives and friends, who are entertained with music and plays.

858 The lad who has prepared to renounce the world for a season, or it may
792 be for life, is called *shinláung*. The *shinláung* festivals usher in the religious
796 or lenten season—*wâ*, June to September—the season of rain in Bahár,

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

31. SHINLAUNG ARRAYED FOR HIS FETE.

the home of the Buddha. In 858
order to accentuate the renunciation 792
of the world which
the lad is making, he is arrayed 796
and attended like a
prince and makes a royal
progress on horseback or in [292]
a chariot to the monastery.
Attendants bear gilt umbrellas
over him, and a
retinue of relatives and
friends carry his *paréikaya*
and offerings for the use of
the monastery. The *paréikaya* 792
are the eight chattels,
to the possession of which the regular recluse (*yahán*) is restricted. They 785
consist of the *thingán* or monastic yellow robes, *viz.*, the loin-cloth (*thimbáing*),
upper cloth (*egusí*), wrapper (*thingán-dyí*), and red girdle (*kabán*); a needle (*at*), [412]
wherewith to piece his clothing together, a hard-baked black earthen pot [302]
(*thabéit*) in which to collect the morning dole of food, a filter (*yezít*) to strain
the drinking water clear of living things, and a razor (*thindôn-dá*) to shave the 291
head and face (excepting the eyebrows). The garments are of plain cloth, without any cut, but torn into strips and joined up again (by the donors) in commemoration of the primitive rule of piecing the garments together from rags, as well as to deprive the cloth of value. The cloth is mostly cotton, but silk and wool are also offered. The stuffs are dyed a bright ochre, with chips of Jack-wood. By repeated washings the colour deepens to tan. These varying shades produce a picturesque effect. The recluse customarily also receives sandals to wear, a deer-skin to sit and sleep upon, a broom to sweep his dwelling with, and a large palm-leaf fan, both for a shelter from the sun and a screen from the sight of womankind. The *thabéit* is slung in a yellow cotton net, and has a lacquerwork stand and cover. In respect of chattels, however, these primitive tokens of privation have sunk to a form. The recluses have many changes of raiment and the use of spacious dwellings

32. SHINLAUNG PAGEANT (BURMA PROPER).

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25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 with good furniture. In all other respects they rigidly observe the rule of their life.

792 858 At the *kyaung*, or by another usage at the home of the candidate, whither the recluse has been invited to preach, the lad will pray for reception as probationer of the *thingâ*—the assembly of devoted seekers after righteousness—presenting his *parëikaya* at the same time. In response, the recluse will recite the ordinances of reception. First, he will inquire about the bodily integrity of the candidate, the consent of his parents, his freedom from debt and other bonds. Then he will recapitulate the rule of the novice's life, who, besides the five commandments binding on all men, must observe five additional injunctions (*thila*). The cardinal precepts of the Buddha are (1) to respect every form of life; (2) to respect the property of others; and (3) their wives and children; (4) to respect truth; and (5) sobriety. The additional rules are—to eschew sexuality, frequent meals, games, gold and silver, finery and worldliness. The recluse should meekly fix his gaze on the earth not more than "a four-span yoke" in front. He takes food in the forenoon only. The novice gives his hours to

23. SHINLAUNG PAGEANT (PEGU).

24. SHINLAUNG PAGEANT (PEGU).

25. SHINLAUNG PRAYING FOR ACCEPTANCE (PEGU).

attendance upon his preceptor, 858 to contemplation and 792 sober study. His preceptor receives voluntary confession of faults, without questioning, prescribes penances, and is to his disciple as a parent. Having acquiesced in the rule of life, the candidate is admonished to divest himself of worldly state and personal adornment, and after that to renew his prayer for admission.

The *shinláung* then retires to be divested of his grandeur. His long hair— [302] the pride of the Burman—is cut close to the roots with scissors and preserved by his female relatives. His head is shaved by a male relative. The same day, or later, after bathing, the candidate will present himself clad in a plain loin-cloth, [291] offering his robes and the rest of the *paréikaya* for acceptance as before. The recluse will now accept the robes on behalf of the Assembly, and deliver them to the candidate, who retires to robe himself. Invested with the *thingán*, he returns as accepted probationer, to make obeisance (*shikò*) to his instructor. The novice takes no vow and owes no formal obedience. Like the full member of the Assembly, he is always free to abandon the religious rule of life (*lu-twét*—to become a layman again). The *goyin* (*maung-yin*, Pâli *samanera*, "*chinthamané*") or "gentle-brother," as the novice is designated, discontinues [553] the use of his secular name, in lieu of which he receives from his preceptor a Pâli title (*bwè*), chosen in the same way as the secular name from one of seven sets. Thus Maung Shwe Nì, Brother Golden-red, becomes Ū Âlawka, Sage Above-the-world.

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26. SHINLAUNG PRAYING FOR ACCEPTANCE (BURMA).

The whole male population of the village are free of the monastery. The recluse and his novices have withdrawn from participation in

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27. SHINLAUNG RENEWING HIS PRAYER.

the world, but not from observation by the world. Great as is the homage accorded to him by the laity, a recluse who should disgrace his cloth—a thing almost unknown — would be promptly unfrocked by them.

For their sustenance the novices and regular recluses depend upon alms. They receive these in kind and according to daily need. Their appeal is mute. The morning after his reception the novice with his brethren will halt in front of his own parents' house and the houses of the neighbours to receive such dole of food as is offered (No. 29). He will not look to right or left, but keep his eyes rooted on the ground, making no sign beyond raising the cover of his alms-bowl. The recluse may not ask for anything whatever, nor even express a predilection. The food, ripe or ready-cooked, as the case may be, is doled indiscriminately into the *thabêit* from the east side, usually by a woman of the house. A woman should not stand in the shadow of a recluse, of a shrine, *zedi*, temple or image. [562] She should not occupy an upper floor when a recluse happens to be beneath, nor enter a *Thein*, nor occupy a higher place with respect to men (p. 72). [576] Food given in a religious spirit, as above described, is called *sun*. The recluses when collecting *sun* are generally followed by a couple of scholars bearing a yoke and basket to receive larger offerings on behalf of the monastery (No. 41).

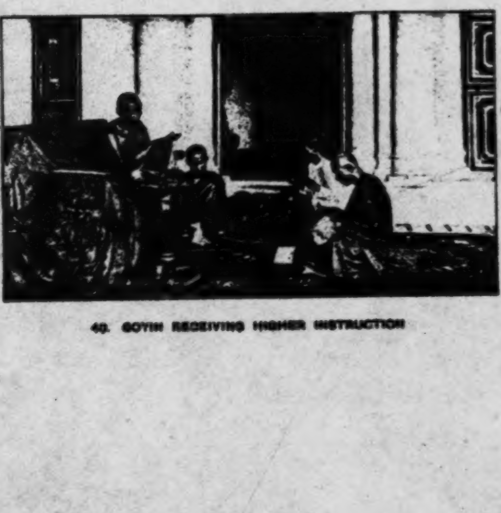
792 Those probationers who remain in the monastery for several 871 years—reckoned by Lents (*wa*)— [805] and who aspire to full membership of the Assembly, read with the 779 recluse Pâli texts of the Tripitaka, and the commentaries on these, [576] and commit portions, sometimes whole books of the canon, to memory. Recluses of standing and also laymen take part in these exercises.

28. GOYIN MAKING OBEISANCE.

39. PAINTING OF SHINLAUNG FETE.

The constituted daily routine of the monastery takes no account of recreation. In practice there is a wide margin of leisure. But the wearer of the yellow robe is not seen at play. Arithmetical puzzles are the nearest approach to a game. On the other hand, the cheerfulness of the race suffers no restraint. There is decorum, without austerity or sanctimony. The severest penance laid upon the novice is temporary relegation to the secular state (*lein-byan*) for such faults as lying, theft, or killing anything. Cruelty to an animal is punished with caning. 792 512 524 577 [689]

The *yahán* exercise no exclusive function beyond that of admitting candidates to the novitiate and the full membership of their Assembly. The affairs of the Buddhist Church are initiated and conducted by the laity. The recluses merely add, by their presence, to the religious distinction of an occasion. At the shrine the recluse is like any other pilgrim; he never is a ministrant or priest. Neither is there any altar. The only material objects to which sanctity pertains are the relics of the Buddha. The members of the Assembly know no distinctions of men, racial or social. As regards the temporal power, of whatever origin, the recluse should be absolutely passive, neither contravening the laws nor invoking them when he suffers wrong. The recluse neither denounces nor harbours the criminal, a neutral attitude of which criminals are not slow to take advantage. 792 794 778 554 [674]



40. GOYIN RECEIVING HIGHER INSTRUCTION

When admitted to full membership of the Assembly instituted by the Buddha (*Thingá*, Pâli *Sangha*), the novice becomes *Yahán* (*Yahán-daw*, *Rahán*, *Arahan*), which signifies *perfected*, one advanced a stage 792 [871]

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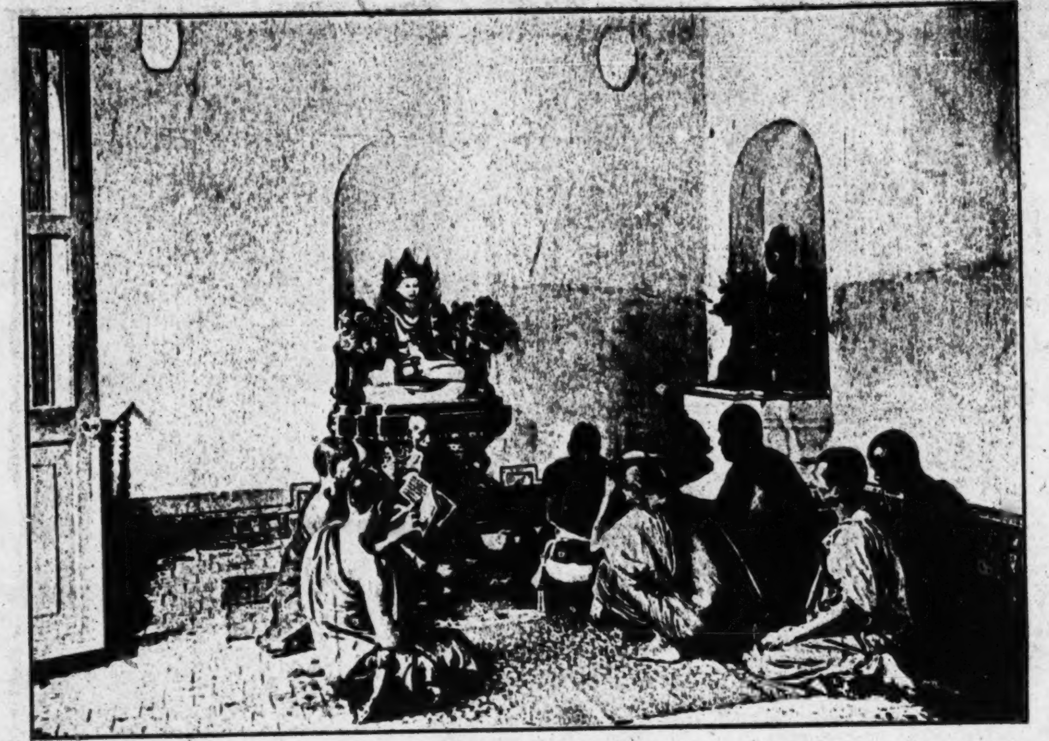
41. YAHAN ON THE ROUND FOR SUN.

towards the higher spiritual condition of
Ayahát and *Ayáttapò*. The primitive appellation
is *Beikku* (Pâli *Bikku*), one
dependent on alms. The spiritual state
preceding *Yahán*, that of the man so
imbued with the spirit of the Buddha's
teaching as to desire membership of his
Assembly, is called *Thawtapan*. The candidate
for full membership must possess
the qualifications for the degree of *goyín*,
in addition to a knowledge of the rule
of life of the *yahán* and a modicum of
religious learning. Most *yahán* are *ngè-byu*—pure
from youth—that is, have passed
direct from their youthful novitiate to
full membership. Men of any condition
may be received, and at any age above
twenty, if free from debt and other ties,
but must undergo a fresh probation. Over and above the precepts observed by
792 the *goyín*, the *yahán* observes one hundred detailed injunctions. He must not
merely respect life, but also the means to life. He may not wantonly injure a
785 blade of grass. Cleanliness is particularly enjoined. A notable injunction is not
779 to lay up any store of food. He must
not use a raised sleeping-place, though
by day he reclines on the couches presented
to the monastery. The *yahán*
sweeps his dwelling, draws water, washes
his clothing, and so forth, when there
are not *goyín* or lay-disciples to perform
these services for him. Otherwise his
occupations are only those of teaching,
study, and contemplation. In Lent the
[796] *yahán* remains indoors from sunset to
sunrise. At this season he also frequently
selects a forest retreat for contemplation
in the early morning hours (*wussaung*).
792 The *yahán* practises confession to his
brethren of the Assembly, all of whom
554 are equals, but who defer to one another,
according to seniority, which is reckoned

42. BUDDHIST RECLUSE.



43. GOYIN PRAYING FOR ADMISSION TO THE THINGA.

[To face p. [illegible]

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 API Burma
Burmese AP4

[OPP. P.20]

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44. ANCIENT THEIN AT PAGAN.

not by age, but by the
number of lenten seasons
they have belonged to the
Assembly. Vigils and re-
striction of night rest are
not practised. The rule of
life of the *yahán* is laid
down in the *Wini* (*Vinaya
Bitaka*), one of the three
divisions ("baskets") of
the Buddhist scriptures. A
kambawá, or breviary of
scripture, relating to mem-
[212] bership of the Assembly, illuminated with lacquer on copper or ivory leaves, is
read by turns by the five members of the conclave assembled for the reception
of the new member. This solemnity is undertaken in the *thein*, a *wut* set apart
for the *Thingá* alone. No lay persons enter the precincts, but they may be
spectators from a distance. The new *yahán* is called *Upazin*, sojourner recluse,
or assistant to the *Upyise*, or *Pôndyl*, *Kindyl* (incumbent) of the monastery. In
[162] 1891 there were 13,613 *pôndyl*, 6,668 sojourner *yahán*, and 13,500 probationers
in the monasteries of Burma, which numbered 15,371, in a Buddhist population
of about seven millions.

The dedication of the site for building such a *thein* (Pâli *sima*) is preceded
346 by the solemnity of *thein-thamôt*. Ground so dedicated can never be alienated
796 to any other use. In this respect the *thein* is more sacred than the temples in
778 general. After the site has been levelled, it is surrounded with a trench, into
which water is led. In the centre a small well is sunk (*alé-dwin*). The *yahán*,
not less than twenty-four in
number, assemble on the
spot, over which a gay
pavilion (*mandat*) has been
erected, and wait for the
water from the trench to
[792] percolate to the well. When
this occurs, the site is said
to have "taken" (*aung*).
Otherwise it must be re-
jected. The *yahán* gather
round the well and intone
scriptural passages from a

45. YAHAN ASSEMBLED FOR DEDICATION OF THEIN.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

346 *kambawá.* The laity assembled outside the precincts let off rockets and guns in celebration of the event. Finally, the ceremony of *yesétcha,* the pouring 796 of water (No. 100), is performed by the grantor of the site—as at every other

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[213]

46. ILLUMINATED KAMBAWA.

religious dedication—to signify that the property has been dedicated for ever. The precincts of the *thein* are marked by low boundary pillars, mostly of Sagáing marble, set in the trench, which is then filled in. A different form of *thein* is the *ye-thein,* which is built over the water to effect its isolation.

792 Although the *yahán,* as already stated, may not ask for anything, he may decline what is offered. He signifies this by inverting his *thabéit* (*thabeit-* 735 *hmauk*). The action has become a symbol for excommunication. The *yahán* might assemble in the *thein* and perform *thabéit-hmauk* against a layman for [794] heinous wickedness. His house would be passed by in collecting *sun* and all offerings tendered by him refused. The [178] practice has become obsolete; it is said to have no warrant in the scriptures, and to be contrary to their spirit.

Where the people are very prosperous and the *yahán* are not many, the collecting of *sun* in the streets has sunk to a formality observed by the novices only, who on return to the monastery empty their *thabéit* to the dogs. But in other circumstances the sojourner *yahán,* novices and scholars live on the *sun.* An ordinance of the Buddha dispenses the *yahán* from collecting his food from house to house if there be pious people who proffer him his sustenance at his abode. The founder of the monastery (*Kyaung-tagá*), who nomin

47. SUN SENT BY THE KYAUNGTAGA.

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[415]

49. FOREST KYAUNG.

ates the incumbent, regularly undertakes the support of the *póndyi*, and frequently of his sojourner *yahán* as well. The food, which is the best of its kind, is brought every morning by the daughters and young children of the supporter, or, in the case of joint support, by children of the leading families in turn. An ornamented vessel is used, having a tall finial to the cover (*ôt*). The supplies are received by the lay scholars
792 or the novices, and by them served to the *yahán*. The principal meal is
taken shortly before noon, for no food may be eaten after that hour till the
264 following sunrise. Water may be drunk and betel chewed at any time.
Tobacco-smoking is discountenanced, especially in Burma Proper, where the
273 religious views are strictest. Burma furnishes the standard both for scholarship
276 and practice, and trains most of the incumbents of the monasteries of Pegu.
Scholars and novices may prepare food at the monastery from raw supplies.
101 These the *yahán* may not even handle. Hired labour (*kappiza dayaka*) may
[444] be attached to the monastery by the
supporter for the preparation of food
792 and other services. In some cases
735 lands have been dedicated for the
maintenance of monasteries and temples. But the *yahán* have no concern
with their administration. Supplies
of raiment, chattels and food are
dedicated to the use of the recluses
[346] when the distinction of their presence
is solicited, especially at *shinlaung*
fêtes and funerals. The annual provision of raiment (*katdin thingán*)
[796] is made between the months of
Thadingyut and *Tasaungmôn*. The
offerings of necessaries are supplemented by accessories of every sort
—books and writing materials, mats,

50. VILLAGE KYAUNG.

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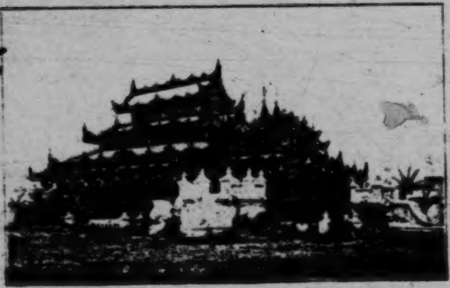

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51. KYAUNG AT THE CAPITAL.

carpets, cushions, handkerchiefs, tables, chairs, betel-boxes and spittoons, glassware and crockery, lamps, chandeliers, clocks, knicknacks and furniture, always to the exclusion of gold and silver. Gilt wares are permissible.

The strict *yahán* should prepare his shelter for himself, in an unfrequented place. But by the dispensation already referred to, he may avail himself of a solitary dwelling proffered for his use, and this is invariably the case. Not merely are these schools numerous, but they are the most spacious, substantial, and ornate edifices in the land. Many of them are of palatial size and appointments. The Burman finds nothing too good or too beautiful for those who subject themselves to the restraint of the recluse. The recluse on his part is conventionally oblivious of the magnificence that surrounds him. It is not for him to deprecate. The religious merit of the work, which furnishes the motive of the founder, is proportioned to the outlay upon it. From the bamboo *kyaung* in the forest costing a hundred rupees or less, individuals spend up to hundreds of thousands on the palatial monasteries of the towns (*cf.* p. 75).

792 When the incumbent of a monastery removes or dies, the senior sojourner (*upazin*) may receive his place as *pôndyi*. Otherwise an *upazin* is invited from elsewhere, or the *pôndyi* of another *kyaung* is prevailed upon to move. The *upazin* who has become *pôndyi* defers to his preceptor as before. Every monastery has a titular Pâli appellation, such as *Thila-ekkaya kyaung*, Letter-of-the-Law monastery.

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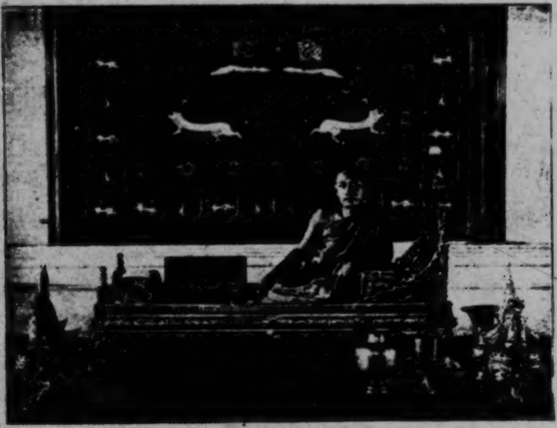
792
779 There is no hierarchy in the Assembly of *yahán*. But it commonly happens that a number of monasteries recognise a venerable teacher as referee upon matters of scholarship

52. PALACE KYAUNG.

792 and doctrine. Such a group is called *gaing*, and its president *gaing-ôk*, his
779 deputy *gaing-dauk*. In the same way a group recognise a *Sadáw—Sayá-daw*, or chief teacher. The whole body again defer to a chief *Sadáw*, usually the



54. YAHAN INSTALLED AS PONGYI.

yahán who has been religious instructor to the King during his novitiate, and who is called *Thâthanabáing*.

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785 In reaction against the comfort with which the laity endow the monasteries, the *yahán* periodically repair to country retreats for ten or twenty days at a time, either singly or in camps of many, for the sake of cultivating primitive use. Here each *yahán* has a dwelling of the narrowest compass and makes shift with the mere chattels ordained in the canon. But the laity, ever ready to minister to the *yahán*, convert these camps into centres of festivity for the

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55. WUSSAUNG CAMP.

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[792]
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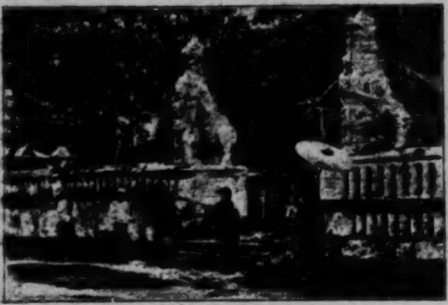

56. YAHAN PASSING THE STREETS.

whole country-side. The camp is laid out in the rice-fields after harvest, in the form of a square, with a pavilion in the middle for the *yahán* to meet and practise confession (*âba-pye*). There are a few *yahán* who do not settle in a *kyaung*, but wander from place to place, in the primitive way, the people providing them with temporary shelter.

The *yahán* make journeys to the seats of learning and the *kyaungs* of their former teachers, and make pilgrimages to shrines. A few travel as far as Ceylon and Buddha Gâya in Bahâr. On such journeys the *yahán* is accompanied by a scholar or attendant deputed by the *kyaungtagâ* to carry provisions and money, which the *yahán* may not handle. When not collecting their *sun*, the *yahán* go abroad with attendants and carry umbrellas, or suffer such to be carried over them, and wear sandals. The *yahán* allow themselves to be driven in ox and buffalo carts; but do not drive or mount an animal or avail themselves of horse-draught. They travel by boat, steamer, and rail. Aged *yahán* are carried on a litter (*yin, waw*).

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The *kyaung*, primarily a shelter for the *yahán*, has, in virtue of his occupation, come to be a school. It is at first established on the outskirts of a settlement or at some distance away from it. Secular buildings are not erected within the shadow of a religious building. But the growth of towns brings the houses up to the precincts (*parawún*) of the *kyaung*, which stands within a liberal enclosure, planted with fruit-trees. The *kyaung* as such has no particular style. The superposed roofs and decorated spires (*pyatthat*) of the votive *kyaung* are emblems of secular state, added to confer distinction.

57. YAHAN ON HIS JOURNEY.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

83. DAUTCHA YATHE.

Burma by pilgrims. Dried and gilt leaves are 788
also brought as relics. The seeds of the tropical
ficus species germinate in the fork of some other 824
tree or in a cranny of masonry and flourish in such mould as they find. The roots develop thick bands which dislodge the masonry, but, interlacing in all directions, hold the loose material together while the tree lives; or else, when the host is another tree, strangle it and take its place (Nos. 77, 245, 321).

The *yahán* are not the only religious celi- 792
bates of Burma. Several other classes follow this way of life, observing many or few rules, according to their own choice. Nearest to the *yahán* are the *yathé*. They depend chiefly on alms, but cultivate gardens for themselves. Their appeal for alms is mute, they accept them in money as well as in kind, and they lay up a store for actual needs. They take food in the forenoon only. The *yathé*, who are few in number, live in forest caves or in derelict shrines, and shift for themselves, singly or in small colonies. The majority study, though they do not teach; some are illiterate. They receive a certain deference from the laity, and themselves defer to the *yahán*. The *yathé* are the subject of harmless satire and burlesque in the plays; the *yahán* never. The robe is like that of the *yahán*, but dyed tan instead of yellow. *Yathé* mostly shave the head, but there is a class who wear the hair long. Certain of them use a headgear called *dautcha*, which forms a receptacle for an image of the Buddha. Some are addicted to mild forms of occultism such as alchemy (p. 111) and devising cabalistic diagrams for charms and tattoo-marks. These practices are under the ban of Buddhism. Pretensions to occult powers, such as have

84. CAVE-SHRINE NEAR MAULMAIN.

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25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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85. POTHUDAW.

been brought into a pseudo-connection with Buddhism by certain western neophytes of the Tibetan cult, are unheard of in Burma, which is the stronghold of primitive tradition.

Pôthudaw observe fewer *thila* than *yathé*. They make their appeal with a gong of triangular shape (*kyìzi*, Nos, 22, 86), which spins on the string it hangs by, and emits a high and sustained throbbing note. *Pôthudaw* eat in the forenoon only. They accept alms in money and in kind, for which they carry baskets with a shoulder-yoke. They wear a white robe, shave the head, and pluck out the beard. *Pôthudaw* shift for themselves in *zayáts* about the temples and seldom remain long in one place.

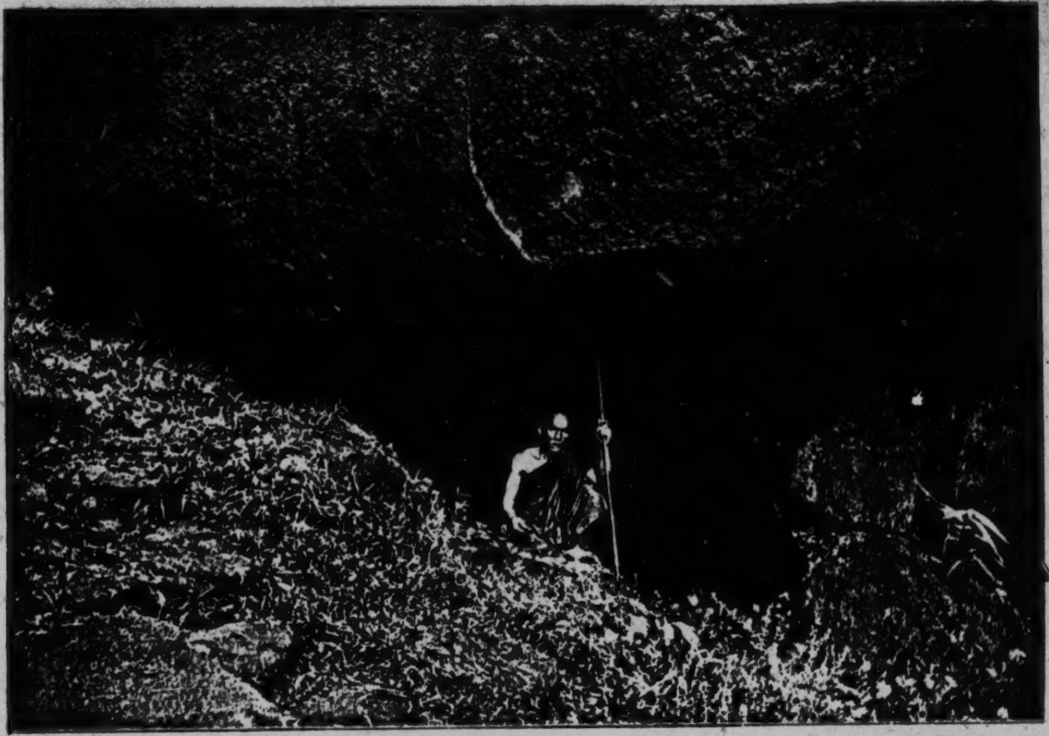
792
562 *Mèthilá* are female celibates who observe a rule parallel to that of the *Pôthudaw*. They shave the head. Their robe is like that of the other celibates with the addition of a jacket. The cloth is dyed a faint red. Both they and the *pôthudaw* are generally individuals who have lost their family ties. In some places *kyaungs* are provided for *mèthilá*, [871] where they keep schools for girls. A few are possessed of learning. *Mèthilá* are about as numerous as *pôthudaw*, and both together are about one-tenth to one-twentieth as numerous as *yahán*, and several times more so than *yathé*. There is no class of female recluses answering to *yahán*.

792
567 *Payadyin* form colonies in the vicinities of the principal shrines and of the cemeteries of large towns. They are the descendants of temple slaves, the condition to which captives in war were reduced both by the Burman and the Taláing races during their incessant

86. METHILA AT WORSHIP.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 API Burma
Burmese AP4

[OPP. P. 40]



87. YATHE BEFORE HIS CAVE

[*To face p.* 40

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88. METHILA ON THE ROUND FOR SUN.

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struggles. Apart from this and the serfdom referred to at p. 32, slavery has only played a subordinate *rôle* in Burma within historic times. The *payadyún*, and they alone, are treated as outcasts by both of these populations. They beg for alms and also appropriate the offerings brought to the shrines in profusion at festivals. Their right to beg is admitted, although they frequently accumulate money and build fine houses.

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Lepers (*anû*) in many cases quit their families of their own accord and settle in the *payadyún* colony. In some places they were compelled to do so. The settlements have thus acquired the semblance of leper colonies. There are a few country villages of this character. Indigent lepers beg for alms. In 1891 there were 6,000 lepers in Burma, the highest ratio in the Indian Empire. There are now four leper asylums. Casual
[735] mendicancy is almost unknown in Burma.

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803
The Burman and Brahman soothsayers (p. 158) are regular frequenters of the shrines. The Burman astrologer (*bedín-sayá*) casts horoscopes on the Brahman model (No. 279) and designates the days auspicious for undertakings. He takes his name from proficiency in reckoning, and is consulted about business calculations that cannot be done mentally.

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The Buddhist duty-days (*ûbôt-ne, thadín*) follow the quarters of the moon. They are kept regularly during lent. On these days the pious laity of both sexes and sedate years observe the rule of *pôthudaw* and *mèthila* from sunrise to sunrise (*ûbôt-saung*). They adopt sober
[785] attire, or else white cotton clothing, which is considered the plainest of any. In the forenoon men and women separately repair to the temple rest-houses, whither food for the morning meal, which has been collected the previous evening from religious donors

89. SOOTHSAYER.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

779 forces." The only certain good within the control of man is the conduct of
his own acts. The final annihilation of desire, attained in the course
775 of lives upon lives of self-discipline, ushers in the serene state of *Nirvâna*
(*Neippan*, Pâli *Nibbán*), in which the subject of *karma* is no longer chained
to forms of existence by any debt of sin. At death is then attained the perfect
condition *Pari-nirvâna*, of which *Nirvâna* was the apprehension in life (Exposition
of Sadáw Û Wuziyama, of Thila-ekkaya *kyaung*). The spiritual stages to
Nirvâna are *Ayahát* and *Ayáttapô*. But it is not claimed for the holiest living
● [792] recluse, much less by himself, that one of these stages has been attained.

100. CEREMONY OF YEZETCHA (p. 29).

779 Devotion to the ideal is the utmost. The third of the gems is the ASSEMBLY, "the spiritual family" of the Buddha, or communion of those who adopt to the full the aids towards holy life inculcated by him and who perpetuate his doctrine and example. Nevertheless, life in the world, though unfavourable to attainment of holiness, in nowise debars it.

The Law of Gawdama Buddha is to last for a period of five thousand years, one half of which has elapsed. It is then to be superseded by the law of a new Buddha. The metaphysics of Gawdama are studied by few (see Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, and Huxley, *Romanes Lecture*), but thanks to the network of schools, with which Buddhism has overspread Burma, its practical features are within the knowledge of all.

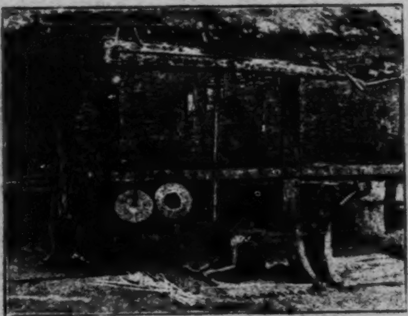
Such is the life that opens to every Burman; such are the scenes and the ideas in which he may grow up and live and die without having taken part in the world longer than the years of childhood. But if, as happens in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the novice of the Assembly returns to the world, he first takes leave of his *pôngyi* and surrenders the *parêikaya* he brought as probationer.

101. GOYIN PRAYING FOR LEAVE TO RETURN TO SECULAR LIFE.

With the exception of the stuff for the 386

126. BINDING THE THATCH.

recluses' robes, cloth is not dyed 286
in the piece, but in the yarn.
Dyes used for cotton are also [792] ●
chiefly imported, but the indigenous dyes continue to be used for silk. The Burmans [342]
excel in yellows, oranges, deep reds, and rich deep greens, which they harmonise with beautiful effect. Their clear blues and purples are indifferent.
Except in a few localities, where 286
weaving is a speciality, the men 462
take no share in the industry beyond constructing the looms. Women spin and dye the yarn and weave [438]
the cloth. The lath of the loom (*lekka*) is of graceful outline—often elaborately carved—and is furnished with two ornamented metal pins, with loose metal rings, [531]
that jangle at each swing of the beam, and proclaim the industry of the young woman, to whom this business chiefly falls. Hence it comes that the loom is a [584]
favourite *rendezvous*. The same applies to other occupations of the girls, such as rice-cleaning, when the suitor will take a turn at the heavy part of the work and lounge while the sifting goes on. Common patterns of cloth are tartans, 286
for which two or three shuttle-spools are required. The plainest cloth woven is at least shot with a colour different to that of the warp. The intricacy of a pattern is denoted by the number of spools. Scroll patterns (*cheik*) in silk are called *lun-taya* (hundred-spool). The warp, is a cubit wide and about twenty cubits long, which makes a man's
loin-cloth (*paso*). The piece is 286
doubled and its edges sewn 291
together along one side; the turn of the cloth serves as a bag or wallet, according as the piece is draped; it has no lining. The [342]
paso is hitched round the loins and girt long or short, according to fancy, without the help of a belt; but elastic belts are now coming in. The slack is worn in a bunch in front (*habdungse*) or is thrown over the shoulder.



127. PLAITING FLOOR-MATS (see p. 60).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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159. CHILDREN AT THE RIVER SIDE (p. 81).

Every stranger, man or woman, is addressed *K'mbyâ*—sir, madam. There is a courteous address for nearly every relation in life. Children, in speaking to their parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts, say *Shin* and *Daw*—lord, lady; wife to husband, *Shin*; husband to wife, *Byo*, *Bya*—terms of endearment; younger brother or sister to elder, *Go*, *Maung-dyì*; elder brother to younger *Maung*; brothers to sisters, *Ma*. *Maung* and *Ma* (brother and sister) have become the ordinary prefixes to names, answering to our Mr., Mrs., Miss. These are used even by parents to their grown-up children. To inferiors and in disparagement, the plain *nga*, *mè*, *mi* are used. Middle-aged men are given the address *Go*, and old men that of *Û* (uncle), which is also the prefix to the *bwè* of the *yahán*. Great regard is conveyed by the address *Sayâ*—teacher, master. The honorific word for wife is *gadâw*, thus—*sayâ-gadâw*, *min-gadâw*. To royalty the addresses were *Gôdaw*—royal self; *Ashin-Payâ*—lord of lords; *Pôn-daw-dyì*—of great glory. These titles came to be used for ministers and governors, as more euphemistic ones were devised for the kings. The same addresses are accorded by courtesy to the *yahán*, who on their part address the layman as *Tagâ*, *Tagâdaw*—supporter, great founder. The layman refers to himself as *tabyì-daw*—the honoured disciple. In other relations of life, other periphrases are used for the pronouns of the first and second persons. The plain *I* and *you* — *ngâ*, *nin* — are only used in disparagement. Thus the current phrase for *I* is *tyunôk*—the humble servant. (For women, *tyunma*.) In addressing superiors, the phrase is *tyundâw*, *Payâ-tyundâw*

● [792]

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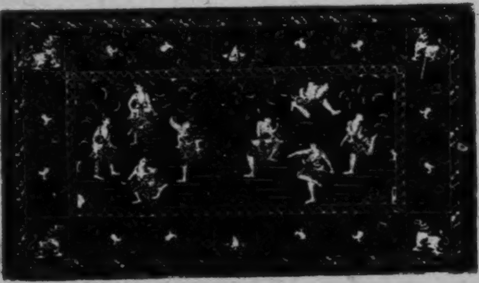

160. CHINLON GAME—APPLIQUE WORK (p. 179).

25; Febrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 · API Burma
Burmese AP4

181. CHILDREN'S TUBS AT FLOOD-TIME (p. 81).

—the slave, his lordship's humble servant. 576 There are special honorific terms for the coming 554 and going, eating [857] and sleeping of royalty and of the *yahán*. The most coveted titles or appellations are those of *kyaung-tagá*, *Payá-tagá* — founder/ of a school, founder of a temple. The first of these is given by courtesy to persons of venerable [888] age. The great increase of prosperity has given a corresponding impetus to the founding of such works, so that the *tagá* are more numerous than ever before. The private foundations are on a scale of unprecedented magnificence. At no period has Buddhism shone throughout the land in such resplendence as now. Personal titles and badges (*salwè*. No. 31) used to be given by the kings. Small dignities and offices have been [524] hereditary in many places. Nevertheless, no aristocracy has developed. One of these titles was *Thakin* (master, lord), now assumed by all Europeans in the same way as "*sahib*" in India. Despite the punctilio in address, greetings are unusual between equals. After absence, a mere "Here you are again" and an inquiry about health—*ma-e-lâ?* At departure, "I'm off," "You're going"—*thwa dawmé*. There is nothing answering to the established *salâm* or to our "Good day," "Good-bye." The verbal salutation to the *yahán*, after obeisance, is *Gôdaw-mya thippaya pyippa-e-lâ*—is your Grace daily provided with the canonical

182. CARVINGS OF [illegible] FLOWER (pp. 18, 179).

[778]

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183. THE PASYA SHRINE (p. 188).

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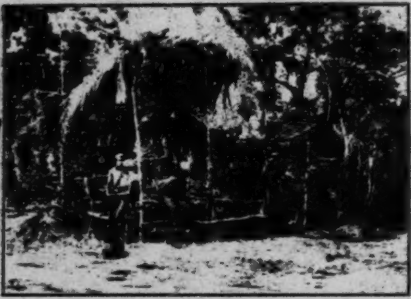

184. FOREST ZAYAT AND WATER-STAND p. 63.

requirements? To which the *yahán* cordially responds, *pyippa, pyippa, tagàdaw*—that I am, my valued supporter! Just as salutations are ordinarily omitted, so thanks are only expressed for special favours. The sense of obligation is conveyed by adopting courteous forms of speech, in which the particle *be* always figures. The set forms of *please* and *thank you* are thus dispensed with. Where, however, a disparity of age or position exists, every act of the superior becomes [431] by courtesy a boon. A Burman is disconcerted by a simple present, as well as by *bakshish* and payments above the stipulation, which he is particular to make beforehand. But when approaching a superior with a request, the inferior bears an offering of courtesy, generally fruit. The inferior makes *shikò* both on approaching and taking leave. A Burman does not stand, in the presence of his superior, but squats down. When he has occasion to pass close to his superior, he does not walk erect but crouches. By well-bred Burmans the gestures of respect are performed in a very graceful manner. Every Burman, the *yahán* not excepted, on ascending the *kyannéing* of a house, removes his [356] sandals or shoes. As we Westerns respect the *roof* that our host has provided by doffing our head-gear, so Easterns respect the *floor* that is provided—an observance of a practical nature where the floor serves both for seat and table. In 576 an analogous way to our greeting with the hat, the Oriental shows respect by slipping the sandals even outside the house. Still more [515] courteous is the practice of washing the feet before entering a house or *kyaung*. Burmans always contrive to sit so as to hide the soles of the feet or to turn them

185. RECEIVING A VISITOR.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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[526]
[241]
[821]

414. WATER-THROWING AT NEW-YEAR.

Party feeling, which often runs high between the quarters of a village, with their rival *kyaung* and *zedi*, finds an outlet at *Tagú* in the tug-of-war (*lun-swè*). As the superstitious whistle for the wind, so do they expect to tug in the monsoon by this means, at the season when everything is panting for rain.

After *Tagú*, the next festival season is *Wàzò*—in June—the commencement of the Buddhist Lent. This season is signalised by the *Shinláung fêtes*, described in Chapter III. During Lent there is no regular festival.

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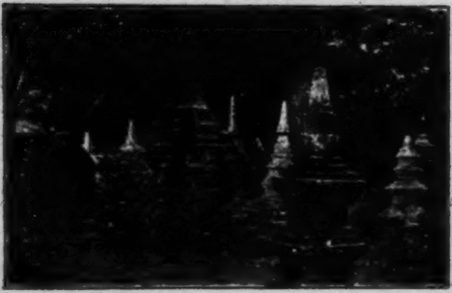
The great festival of *Thadìndyút* celebrates the close of Lent. It falls in October, when the rains are generally over, and is the one for which the most extensive preparations are made. Every festival is signalised by the offerings made to the *yahán*. But now they are literally "poured" in profusion, as the word implies (*sun-láung*). *Yazamá*—paths fenced with bamboo trellis, such as those prepared for the progress of royalty—are got ready along the chief thoroughfare. Through these on the morning of the great day the *yahán* defile in endless procession. As many as a thousand *yahán* may be invited to receive the *Thadìndyút* offerings in a large town. The offerings are poured into the alms-bowls by the laity; scholars are stationed at intervals to relieve the *yahán* of their loads of offerings. After the *yahán* come *pôthudaw* and *mèthilá*. Both ends of the *yazamá* are decorated with arches of bamboo and tinsel. About these are grouped life-size figures of mythical import—dragons to guard the entrance, princes and princesses of the *nats* to take part in the honour done to the *Thingè* (No. 151). In the evenings fire-

415. RANGOON PROCESSION AT NEW-YEAR.



441. CINERARIA ON SACRED GROUND.

if of a woman, towards the 764
right. After the coffin has been lowered, the relatives and friends throw on the earth. The chief mourner waves a kerchief and calls on the spirit to return (*leippya-kaw*); the kerchief is deposited where the corpse had lain in the dwelling, for seven days, when friends are bidden once more. Regular funerals are held when a person has died a death that is looked upon as natural. In the case of violent and other "unripe" deaths the body is buried in haste without any obsequies (p. 188).

Incongruous as are certain of the customs observed at lay-people's funerals, 764
it is at the funerals of the solemn recluses that the boisterous Burman practices
reach their climax. When the incumbent of a *kyaung* dies (much less pomp 792
is displayed at the funeral of a sojourner), the body is embalmed, so as to allow of several months being devoted to the preparations for the funeral. The corpse is swathed like a mummy and laid in a solid dug-out coffin of hard wood. Mercury is poured in at the mouth and honey is applied externally. A support for the coffin is made in the form of a *nagá*, raising its head and fiery tongue to guard its trust. Upon the coffin rests an effigy of the deceased. Beneath the *nagá* is a throne (*ballin*), decorated with gilding and colours. Sometimes the whole structure is of glass mosaic (*thâyô*), and subsequently forms part of the catafalque. Such elaborate *dalá* are not burned, but brought back to the *kyaung*, where they are kept, although not used again. Over all is a royal canopy of corresponding magnificence, with the *tibyu* or royal ensign at the four corners. Thus the coffin lies in state in the *kyaung*, or in a special building, it may be during the whole rains, while the *kyaungtagá* is occupied with the

442. THE LAST STAGE.

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443. BIER OF PONDYI.

preparations for the grand funeral ceremony, which is called *pôndyî-byan*—the *translation* of the *yahân*. The expenses are frequently shared and public contributions flow in. The catafalque is of the same design as the ordinary *dalâ*, but of several times greater dimensions—fifty to sixty feet high to the *tî* of the *pyatthat*. It is solidly constructed, and braced and strengthened in every direction. At the present day the catafalque is mostly erected on a stout platform on wheels. A long cable proceeds from each end of the carriage to draw it by, and enable it to be controlled where the road descends. It is difficult to manœuvre at the turns of the streets and under the telegraph-wires, although the latter are carried on special posts where they cross the approaches to cemeteries. The *pyatthat* often fails to reach its destination in its original perfection; nevertheless it stands out brilliantly in the grand display, in which it is frequently preceded and followed by subsidiary *pyatthat* erected over carriages which bear the largest offerings to the *kyaungs*. The Myi[illegible]mo Daung with its denizens (p. 38) is built up on a carriage, others are bright with *nats* and *thadyâ*, immense paper models of boats, ships, and steamers, and similar freaks of the *Thadîndyut* carnival. Life-size models of white elephants, caparisoned with red and tinsel, move in the procession. Uniform costumes are got ready, and scores of young men are drilled for their parts in the *cortège*. The day is fixed long beforehand, and people throng in from all the neighbouring villages in their brightest silks. The sunny streets are lined with booths, *pwè* are being acted, and bands are playing. At noon the great catafalque begins its progress to the cemetery, drawn by the people, preceded and followed by regiments of masqueraders, endless lines of women carrying offerings, and sight-

444. CINERARIUM OF YAHAN.

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seers. If the idea be to conjure up the utmost possible contrast to the life of the man who is being honoured, the object could not be more completely attained. When the bier has reached the cemetery, the coffin is not set on a pyre like that of the layman, but is burned in the catafalque, for which purpose the latter has been filled with combustibles. The fire is not lighted in the common way; it is kindled from a distance by means of rockets. They are contributed by different villages or quarters of the town. Each of them backs their rocket for the honour of starting the fire. In Burma Proper the great rockets are sent through the air, guided by rattans to the catafalque. But it is one thing to reach and another to kindle. The Taláing rockets, with the trunks of hard trees, hooped with iron, for barrels, and mounted on stout carriages, are merely aimed at the catafalque. It frequently happens that none of them hits the mark; then the fire is kindled by hand. But the rocket that went nearest has won the day; great sums of money change hands, and as they return home, some people's spirits are higher than ever, while everybody else puts the best face upon it. *Tè pôndyi-byan kaung-dè*—, it was a glorious *pôndyi-byan*, and the *kyaungtagà* will be congratulated upon it as long as he lives. It is as though feelings held in life-long repression had regained the field and were asserting their sway over the passive embodiment of the restraining power. Extremes meet; and herein the secret may lie of the spell Buddhism exerts over Burma, in her serious mood.

445. PONDYIBYAN.

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446. CINERARIUM OF KING MINDON MIN.

The Burmans are wont to mark the course of life into five stages—first to get strength, then to get knowledge, then

779* [792] By the forming of the Order, it has been said, a vital gospel for Everyman was gradually transformed into a monkish discipline and a dry scholasticism.[21] Others, however, may see in the monastery, not only the very genius of Buddhism, but a further sign of its essentially religious character, while a wider reference will emphasise the relation of the monastery to the life of the community in countries such as Burma and Siam, where Buddhism has remained a dominant influence.

The religious character of Buddhism may be discerned even in the discord among his followers which began in the Buddha's lifetime and divided the first great council, which was held after his death, for sectarianism is more the sign of religious zeal than of philosophic interest. Rival interpretations led eventually to the two main divisions of Buddhism which exist today — the Mahāyāna (Greater Vehicle) or Northern Buddhism, prevalent in China and Japan, and the Hīnayāna (Lesser Vehicle) or Southern Buddhism, prevalent in Ceylon, Burma and Siam.

Prior to this division, there had been a vigorous revival of missionary activity under the great king, Aśoka (circa B.C. 245). Travelling overseas, Buddhism established its citadel in Ceylon when the new faith declined in India before a resurgent Hinduism. A similar missionary vitality expressed itself in the later developments which marked the rise of the Mahāyāna tradition. "The teaching of Buddha is for the salvation of all living beings," Aśvaghoṣa, the St. Paul of Northern Buddhism, is said to have declared when he became the willing and respected captive of the conqueror, Kaniṣka. Buddhism is essentially tolerant and seldom aggressive, but time and again in its long history it has manifested this fervour and persistence. It has known occasions of decline and even decadence. It has, in places, gone underground and almost disappeared. But through all vicissitudes it has shown a remarkable tenacity, and today it is still one of the living religions of the world. Father d'Eypernon remarks its 'suppleness.' Buddhist monks at the present time, he affirms, do not hesitate to affirm that Buddhism is excluded from any Communist campaign against religion, since the Buddha was the first Communist.[22]

779* 775 With the early expansion of Buddhism primarily in mind, Dahlmann reiterated Max Müller's objection that Nirvana, conceived as Annihilation, could never have been the goal of such a missionary faith as Buddhism. 'Nirvāṇa, die Oede des Nichts, ein "welteroberndes" Ideal!'[23] The exclamation arises even more irrepressibly if we consider the subsequent history of Buddhism. Nirvana, in its religious context, may not be

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[21] Cf. Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Sakya*, and other works.

[22] *Les paradoxes du Bouddhisme*, Preface, p. ix.

[23] *Nirvāṇa, Eine Studie zur Vorgeschichte des Buddhismus*, pp. 5, 6.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

a simple, straightforward affirmation, but it is not denial. No religion 779*
could so persist if it merely brought man's elemental aspirations to a 775
sharp cliff and threw them over.

5. *Burmese Buddhism*

If there are good reasons for approaching the subject of religious paradox by a study of Buddhism, there are also good reasons for considering Buddhism as it appears in Burma where it is still a living and a dominant religion. 121

In the study of great religious traditions there is always need to maintain a balance between regard for the written texts and for the living expression. To consult one without the other is to misinterpret both. What the Christmas stories in the gospels mean to Christians cannot be fully discerned if they are isolated from Christmas observance any more than the Jātaka stories of Buddhism can be fully appreciated until they are read in the context of popular faith, with its drama and poetry. And what an entirely misleading impression of monastic Buddhism one might get from the Abhidhamma literature unless one has seen something of the life of a Buddhist monastery! This balance, as our Burmese critic observed, has not always been maintained in the study of Southern Buddhism.

Burma provides exceptional opportunities for such a study. "If anybody wants to know and see Buddhism as conceived and preached by the Buddha himself so far as the Saṃgha life goes," says a recent writer, "one can see a nearest approach to it in the monasteries of Burma. . . . Of all the Indianised lands of South-eastern Asia, Burma is indeed the only country where monastic Buddhism of the Theravāda nikāya survives to this day in its pristine purity."[24] And the same writer emphasises the impact of this monastic life on Burmese life and culture. [792]

In Burma, eighty-five per cent of the inhabitants are Buddhists. Of these, one in every hundred is a Buddhist monk. Go where you will, you find the yellow robe of the Order, the pagoda gleaming white across the plain or on the hillside, the monastery in every village, intimately related to the life of the people. This has been the situation for centuries. Here one can see Buddhism in action; one can try to interpret its symbols in the light of the very real, if rustic, civilisation which it has shaped and maintained. Burma is one of the most interesting countries in the Orient. Its people are literate. There is freedom from caste, and, for that matter, scarcely any class system. In the days of the monarchy, "when you left the king, you dropped at once to the villager."[25] An Englishman observed, [162] 779* 565 562 779*

[illegible] Nihar-Ranjan Ray, *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, chap. VII, p. 262.

[25] Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, chap. IX, p. 106.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

175 But Burmese kings were not always good. The monasteries which be-
came centres of community life in village after village have to be pictured
792 more often against a dark background of marauding armies, political
779* feud and violent revolt. This chequered history gives point to the
suggestion that Burma owes its civilisation and 'the preservation of . . .
moral and mental balance' very largely to the Buddhist Order which
persisted and grew apace through all vicissitudes.[33] Within the Order,
there was a remarkable degree of discipline, upheld by a *Thāthanābaing*
or Burmese Arch-Abbot. There was also a remarkable unanimity.
[795] Although there were different schools and parties, it is significant that
there is little, if any, hint of doctrinal controversy. If there had been any
considerable impact of Mahāyāna interpretation, we should surely have
heard more about it. What, on the contrary, is much more evident, is the
177 continued impact of Ceylon. Perhaps the most serious division was
795 occasioned by a claim that it was necessary to resort to Ceylon to main-
779* tain the legitimate 'line of descent.'[34] There were, it is true, schismatics.
Non-conformist Paramatā sects decried the Order and taught the ex-
istence of an immanent Divine Being, the *Shwe Nyan Daw*, a belief which
may reflect either Mahāyāna or Hindu influence. By and large, however
the dominating religious and cultural force was Hīnayāna Buddhism for
eight centuries without interruption. We have therefore good reason for
beginning a study of Southern Buddhism in a country which has been so
deeply impressed by its influence.

114 There is also a personal reason. It was in Burma, some twenty years
121 ago, that my own acquaintance with Buddhism began. It was during
discussions with monks and laymen there that I began to think that
Nirvana was the ultimate religious term of their faith — the term
which symbolised the consummation of their doctrine, practice and
aspiration. And the mode of expression of this Nirvana symbol seemed to
me significant, not only for my Buddhist friends, but for all concerned
with the study of religion and life.

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[33] J. A. Stewart, "Note on Some Authorities for the History of Burma," *J.B.R.S.*, XIII (1923), p. 75.

[34] M. H. Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, chap. II, p. 19.

782 customs. Grant Brown observes that, while Buddhists in the Chindwin 779* area still sacrifice fowls to the god of the harvest, 'the thing is done some- 771 what surreptitiously and shamefacedly.'[12]

Other practices survive more openly. In many Burmese villages there 755 is a *nat-ka-daw*, or spirit-medium, generally an elderly or middle-aged woman, who is supposed to be married to a *Nat*. She tells fortunes, and is 791 called in sometimes in cases of sickness to discover whether the patient will recover. Mr. Spear describes an incident of this kind which took place in the main street of a large town in the presence of many spectators. "The *nat-ka-daw*, in addition to her usual clothing, wore a sash around the waist and a cloth wound around her head. She danced with a dah, a long and heavy Burmese knife, in her hand, until she fell exhausted." Plantains and coconuts had been placed in a shelter, opposite the house, as offerings to the *Nat*.[13]

[782] In this case, apparently, the *Nat* was neither held responsible for the sickness nor expected to cure it. There are times of epidemic sickness, however, when a whole village is temporarily abandoned, and special rituals are followed to placate the *Nat*, who is considered to have caused the epidemic.

776 In an interesting account of the development of a modern *Nat* cultus, 782 a Burmese writer describes a public festival in honour of the *Nat*. A play is staged during which one of the Thirty Seven *Nats*, who is personified by a villager, asks the *Nat* of the locality if he is taking due care of the villagers. Here the *Nat* is obviously regarded as benevolent. But we are told that this was not always so. Formerly the Nat was cruel, unreasonable, mischievous and demoniac. But "he is now believed to have taken to religion, to keep the sabbath and to lead the life of a saintly god." In [674] spite of his own sanctity, however, he seems to favour evil-doers. "No organised theft is ever committed in Lower Burma . . . without invoking his aid." The would-be criminals cook a meal within a circle they have marked on the ground. If any of the rules of the succeeding ritual are [777]* broken, the proposed robbery is abandoned. Some Buddhist monks of ●[793] this region, more orthodox than others, have tried to suppress the Naf cultus, but in vain.[14]

771 Such beliefs and practices are obviously bound to affect thought and 776 conduct. The Burmese feel around them a vast, invisible *Nat* world, which is both near and remote. There are spirits in the trees, the rivers,

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[12] *The Pre-Buddhist Religion of the Burmese*, p. 9.

[13] R. F. Spear, unpublished MS, *The Syncretism of Animism and Buddhism in Burma* (1928) chap. 1, p. 14.

[14] U The Khin, "Is U Yin Gyi a National God of the Burmese?" *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. XIV, part II (1924).

the lakes, the mountains and there are distant *Nat* realms ruled by *Nat* 771 chieftains. All of these spirits are capricious. They encourage the view 776 that life is a gamble. A man must bargain and wile his way through as best he can, hemmed in by a vague, immeasureable threat of evil. A religion, therefore, which points the way through the maze, indicates some order in the realm of caprice and promises deliverance from evil, may be the more welcome. On the other hand, it contains a challenge to caprice in oneself.

2. *Animism and Buddhism interwoven*

There is no question, therefore, of the survival of Animism in Burma, 771 nor of its influence. The only question which arises is the *extent* of this 779* influence. Is it so persistent and powerful that Buddhism is no more than a surface polish ?

At first sight, this indeed may seem to be the case, for not only is Animism a parallel cultus, sometimes furtive but frequently brazen; it also seems to be interwoven in the very texture of popular Buddhist expression and practice. As a boy, the Burman learns how Nats watched over the infant Buddha, how the Buddha, by his virtue, defeated the jealous Manh *Nat*, how the rest of the *Nat* world acclaimed the victory with shouts of exultation. *Nats* appear in all the subsequent events of the Buddha's history.[15] On pagoda platforms the boy may see scenes depicting the *Nats*. Early in his education, he may learn a poem celebrating the Buddha's victory. On the most memorable day of his life as a Buddhist, the day of his *shin-byu* or confirmation, he may *shikoh* to the *Nat* shrine. At his death, a monk may be called to his side, not to give him spiritual [792] ● consolation but 'because the good influence of the monk's pious presence keeps away evil spirits.'[16]

Consequently, Burmese Buddhists have been criticised for their inconsistency. [775] How, it is asked, can a belief that a human 'spirit' has been transported to the *Nat* realm be reconciled with the Buddhist denial of the soul ? If Buddhism denies the Divine, and even Buddha himself is not worshipped, how can it be right to worship and propitiate these *Nat* godlings ? How can it be legitimate to expect their assistance, if man is 782 the arbiter of his own destiny, subject to moral law alone, as Buddhism 779* affirms ? And Buddhism teaches: Thou shalt not kill. What, then, of fowls 771 and oxen and even humans sacrificed to propitiate *Nats?* Toleration is

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[15] Cf. Bigandet, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 37; cf. Temple, *Thirty Seven Nats*, p. 8.

[16] Cf. Purser and Saunders, *M.B.B.*, pp. 28, 97; Sir George Scott, *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, Vol. I, chap. xxii, p. 280.

771 of the Burman."[24] The most adequate inquiry on the subject to-date is
779* the unpublished thesis by Mr. Spear which I have been privileged to quote.
776 "It must be said," concludes Mr. Spear, "that Buddhism in Burma has
kept itself remarkably free from the practice of taking ideas and customs associated with primitive religion in general and Nat worship in particular, and making them its own.... It is Buddhism which is the real religion of the people. It is what they practise in their best moments; it is what they want their children taught.... To be a Burman is to be a Buddhist."[25]

We arrive, then, at the opposite conclusion to that stated by Mr. Lowis in his Census Report. Instead of saying that 'the Burman has added to his animism just so much Buddhism as suits him,' it is nearer the truth to say that he has added to his Buddhism just so much animism as suits his Buddhism.

Those who judge otherwise generally pay full attention to the strength and vitality of Animism, but they give less than due attention to the greater strength and vitality of organised Buddhism. They fail to note the intimate relation of the Buddhist Monastic Order to the life of the community. To this subject we must now turn, not only to accentuate the fact that Burma is Buddhist Burma, but to observe in sufficient detail the essentially religious context of the hope of Nibbāna.

3. *Monastery and Community*

792 A monastery suggests to many minds a cloistered company, shut away
346 behind high walls, or secluded on some remote hillside, as frequently in
China. In a sense, the Burmese monks are similarly secluded. The monastic building, with its seven-tiered roof denoting sanctity, is generally found just outside a village, set in a bamboo grove or flanked by shady mango trees. Rising to a tapering umbrella point *(hti)* above the trees, there is a *tedi* or pagoda,[26] which may be painted white or gold. Smaller pagodas are grouped around. Generally within the monastery building, but sometimes outside, there is an image of the Buddha, and probably several others — but always the same Buddha, Gautama, and

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[24] Rev. G. Whitehead, *M.B.B.*, p. 37.

[25] *The Syncretism of Animism and Buddhism in Burma*, p. 80.

[26] *Zedi* or *tedi*, from the Pali, means the offering place or place of prayer. *Paya*, which has also the latter connotation, is more frequently used for larger *zedis* and other shrines. The *zedi* contains relics. Hence it is nowadays often termed a pagoda (from the Singhalese dhagoba — relic (*dhātu*) shrine. But pagoda is not a Burmese term. Cf. Scott, *The Burman*, Vol. I, chap. xv, p. 196; Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, chap. VII, pp. 128ff.

invariably in the same posture, seated, with one arm across his lap. The 792
whole atmosphere is one of ordered, unhurried peace, whether within the 346
timbered buildings, or within the surrounding compound.

But the monastery is seldom far away from the village, and this is of 792
set purpose. The Buddhist *Saṃgha* in Burma might well be described as 621
a teaching Order. "Of all charities, charity of learning is the noblest,"
observes a Buddhist layman,[27] and the monastery dispenses this charity 869
freely. It provides the village school. There the boys learn to read and 871
write. There, moreover, they are tutored in Buddhist lore, with a firm emphasis on ethical requirements. They learn the 'three Jewels' which enjoin reverence for the Buddha, the Law *(Dhamma)*, and the Order, and the five precepts -- not to kill, not to steal, not to lie, not to commit adultery, not to drink intoxicants. In the *Mingalā Thot* or "Song of Great Blessing," which they recite by heart[28], they learn that a wise and good man will seek to store up merit by fulfilling his domestic duties, by giving ample alms, by seeking 'self-knowledge' and by learning from holy men 'as chance affords.' The monastic ideal of utter renunciation, 'from all attachment free', is also indicated and 'Nirvana here' is said to be 'true happiness' leading to the Highest Bliss.[29] They will also learn stories of the Buddha's previous birth from the *Jātakas*, and, above all, the story of the historic Buddha.

But attendance at the day school is not their only initiation in the 79.2
faith. Every Burman boy, at the age of puberty or earlier, is expected to 857
leave home and become a boarder at the monastery for a period which may vary from weeks to years. "A Buddhist who has not been a *koyin* (novice) or donned the yellow robe," remarks a Burmese writer, "is looked upon as one who has missed the most essential (part) of his experience in this world." The village school often appears to be a merry jumble to the outsider, but during this time as a novice "each boy gets individual attention.... There is a wholesome atmosphere of intimacy and understanding between the teacher and the taught." Most of the novices return to secular life, but some remain to become fully ordained monks.[30]

The *shin-byu* ceremony, or rite of confirmation, which is another 792
essential in the Burmese boy's initiation, generally precedes his entry to 881

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[27] U Set, "Life in a *Phongyi Kyaung*," *Rangoon Times*, (May 13, 1931).

[28] See Appendix for fuller account of this Song and other Monastic instruction.

[29] "To understand the literature, 'serious' or popular, of Burma we cannot know the Pali Jātaka too well," M. H. Bode, *The Pali Literature of Burma*, chap. v, pp. 81, 82.

[30] U Set, op. cit.; cf. Scott, *The Burman*, Vol. I, chaps. II, III, and IV.

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the monastery. It is a day of excited celebration. Recalling the Great Renunciation, when Gautama left the royal court in his quest for truth, the boy, attired in princely robes, is feasted by his family and friends until the moment when he casts his finery aside to don the yellow robe of the Order.[21]

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Girls experience a similar ceremonial initiation, when (to the accompaniment of vigorous music) their ears are pierced to take the ear-rings which are the sign of womanhood. They cannot attend the monastic schools with the boys, but other means are found for their education, and they certainly do not lag behind their brothers in intelligence, character or Buddhist zeal. Mrs Hla Oung recounts the story of a little maid taken to the monastery to be reminded of the five precepts, after some childish misdemeanour. (The monk was benign. "There was the faintest suspicion of a smile on his calm face, to show, I suppose, that her backsliding was not to be taken as a defection from the faith.") The 'charity of learning' seems, then, to be shared by girls as well as boys. The status, freedom and privileges of Burmese women have already been remarked and Mrs Hla Oung affirms vigorously that "the life of the Burmese woman is bound up in her religion. Buddhism has formed the character of the Burmese woman.... There are few Burmese women, even in the villages, who are unable to read and write," and the Buddhist scriptures form the ground work of their studies.[22]

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Not only are the monks numerous, but they are dispersed throughout the country. Every village has at least one monastery, and sometimes more. The educational influence of the Order has been, therefore, both organised and ubiquitous. In more recent times this influence has been challenged by new conditions. Government and mission schools have intervened, and the modern Burmese boy may only remain in the monastery as a novice for a brief, token period. But during the centuries which shaped the Burmese character and outlook, the monks as educators had no serious rivals.

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Nor has their ministry to the community been confined to education. Herbs and potions from the monastery are held in high esteem, especially in Upper Burma.[23] The monastery also serves as alms-house and asylum.

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[21] For a good description of this ceremony v. Ananda Metteya, quoted by G. Appleton, *Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 22–23.

[22] Ma M. Hla Oung, "The Women of Burma," *Buddhism*, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 61 (September, 1903, Rangoon); cf. a later series by Daw Mya Sein, "Kin Sein Hla," *Burma Today*, published by the Burma Government in India, 1944, in which the influence of the Monastery is not so strongly emphasised.

[23] "Theirs is faith cure rather than medicine," writes a Burmese correspondent, who cites cures from snake-bite, leprosy and hydrophobia.

Old men will retire to the monastery to end their days there, and younger 792
men, in poverty or other distress, will flee the world for a time. The 737
hospitality of the monks has sometimes been more charitable than discriminate, 672
a circumstances which has brought some monasteries into disrepute, for these temporary inhabitants are allowed to wear the yellow robe, and some are criminals, sheltering from justice. Father Sangermano reports the rescue of prisoners condemned to death. "In thus saving the lives of criminals, (the monks) believe that, as their law forbids them to kill, it must be meritorious to preserve the lives of others."[34]

The monastery is the social centre of the village. Buddhism in Burma 792
is gaily attired, a religion of festival. Frequently there will be an open-air 621
performance in the moonlight, when a birth-story of the Buddha is [545]
dramatized. All this spirited, colourful life gathers around the monastery.

But perhaps the Order's most valuable service to the community is the 626
function fulfilled by the monk as *counsellor*. A group of villagers may 793
gather for a special instruction, others may attend when the monks assemble for devotions, but the monastery is not regarded as a preaching centre or as a place of public worship. In modern times, crowds have flocked to hear the Monyin Sayadaw. Generally, however, the approach in this respect is individual. It is as the individual adviser of each villager that the monk's influence is most strongly felt.

In many and tangible ways, therefore, the monastery serves the community, 792
but it is probable that the villager himself reveres the monk 735
more for services which are intangible and may not appear so valuable to 782
sceptical observers. Early in the morning, the monk, attended by *koyins*, will go the round of the faithful, receiving their offerings of rice in his begging bowl.[35] For the monk himself it is an exercise in humility, for the villager it is one of the chief means of increasing that *kutho* or worthiness which ensures him happiness in this life and the next.[36]

Most of all, however, it is those very aspects of the monk's vocation 792
which distinguish him from the rest of the community, setting him apart, *779
for which the monk is chiefly esteemed. It is because the greater part of his life is spent in spiritual exercises which the villagers do *not* share, that they value him most. The monastery stands for a Way of utter renun-

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[34] *The Burmese Empire*, 3d. Edition, ed. J. Jardine, (London, 1895), chap. xv, p. 122.

[35] Thus *bhikku or bhikṣu*, usually translated monk, means, literally, mendicant. Strictly speaking, a *bhikku* is not a monk; cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II (S.B.B.), p. 81, footnote.

[36] *Kutho* is frequently translated 'merit.' But 'worthiness' is more accurate.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 ciation which the villagers themselves have not undertaken. In a sense, it
779* rebukes their lesser zeal. But it also inspires that zeal. It encourages their faith. It is the poetry in their life, symbolising the Great Peace, the Nibbāna, which is often out of their mind, a remote expectation, but nevertheless, their ultimate goal.

To this cloistered Buddhism of Burma we must now turn, for the full relation of the monk to the community can only be estimated in the light of the life he lives apart from the community.

4. Within the Monastery

788 To some extent, the life of the monk within the monastery is corporate. He joins with his brethren in a daily Act of Adoration —

792 "In order that I may escape the consequences of commissions and omissions, should I have done any in the course of the day or night, either physically or verbally or mentally, I hereby humbly adore and worship, physically, verbally and mentally, the Three Jewels — the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṃgha.

"Because of this my adoration, may I escape the horrors of the four hells, the three *kappas* comprising famine, disease endemic and epidemic, the tragedies of war, the eight unpleasant places, the five enemies, the four wants, the five kinds of ruinations, the ten kinds of punishments, the twenty five kinds of dangers, the sixteen pitfalls in life, and the thirty two kinds of bad luck, but attain Nibbāna very quickly."[37]

In spite of the fact that this Act is said together, its very individual reference will be noted. The same applies to another collective act, when the monks assemble for the *Uposatha* or fortnightly chapter. The rules of the Order are recited, and each monk must confess any infringement. Sangermano notes among the offences to be admitted, "Giving scandal to laymen by small faults."[38] The monk may therefore be said to be concerned with the reputation of the Order and the good of the laity, but he is also very obviously concerned with his own progress in the discipline.

It is often said, in fact, that the Buddhist monk is entirely self-regarding. As he states in the prayer we have quoted, he wants "to attain Nibbana very quickly." He is not content with the more leisurely progress of the layman who expects to see many rebirths before he comes near the goal. The monk has chosen a shorter Path. He has cut adrift from domestic obligations and left the world. He is selfishly concerned

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[37] I am indebted to U Lu Pe Win of Mandalay for this example of a typical 'prayer'; cf. Kenneth E. Wells, *Thai Buddhism: its rites and activities*, chap. III, p. 29.

[38] *Op. cit.*, chap. XIV, p. 120.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

with his own emancipation alone. This criticism is not entirely just. It ignores his service to the community, even if it is allowed that this service is not his primary aim. It also ignores certain emphases in the Buddhist scriptures, and at least one passage where the monk is enjoined to include in his meditations 'radiant thoughts of love' to all mankind.[39] 792

Nevertheless, the greater part of his activity is individual. In some respects, he may be compared with the scholar whose researches may ultimately benefit mankind though meantime they involve seclusion to the neglect of more obvious duties. The monk's value to the villagers is dependent on his own sanctity (as the villagers would readily agree).

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Comparison with the scholar is apt in another sense, for the spiritual exercises which should occupy the monk's solitude seem, at first glance, to be severely and solely intellectual. Burmese monastic studies have been largely guided by the *Abhidhammatthasangaha*,[40] a commentary which is nothing if not analytic. Its purpose is to guide the student to realise existence as the Buddhist estimates it, a flux of component elements. He is to persevere in meditations which will yield an utter detachment from all alluring vanities. In this manual "we see a philosophy which starts with an analysis of (1) what we find (a) within us, (b) around us, and of (2) what we aspire to find. Mind is analysed and catalogued," says Mrs. Rhys Davids. "We cannot but be struck ..... by the relatively strong microscopic power of the introspection employed" – –[41] so struck, indeed, that some have concluded that such a monk must live in a world far apart from the villagers he is supposed to instruct. *His* Buddhism is not *their* Buddhism. So it is argued. The monk is too much the scholar.

Thus we have another theory of two religions in Burma, but this time it is not Buddhism and Animism, it is two Buddhisms: popular and monastic. The distinction is inescapable. We may question, however, whether the distance between scholar and peasant is any greater than in other religious traditions.

There are two qualifications which should prevent exaggeration. The first is the fact that the meditations by which the monk hopes to progress in the eightfold Path to Nibbāna are not so entirely intellectual as they appear to be at first glance. All through there is an equally strong emphasis on moral purity which the *Uposatha* recitals enforce. It is a persistent ethical reference which belongs to scholar and peasant alike.

Secondly, there are, as we have seen, different grades of monks. Not

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[39] *M.I.* 123ff. *(Kakacūpama Sutta)*, cf. *D.I.* 4; cf. Yamakami Sōgen: *Systems of Buddhistic Thought*, chap. II, p. 56.

[40] Trans. by Shwe Zan Aung as *Compendium of Philosophy*, P.T.S., London, 1929.

[41] *Ibid.* Preface, pp. XVIII, XIX.

792 779* 781 every man in a yellow robe is fully ordained, and not every ordained monk is a scholar. There are Brother Junipers who have little more learning than the average farmer. On the other hand, there are laymen who have advanced a considerable way in higher studies and disciplines. The Lēdī Sayādaw's manual on the Exercises, for example, is written for laymen.[42] Thus between the scholar and the simple villager there is a mediating world, composed both of monks and laymen.

Through this mediating world, the moderating influence of scholarly orthodoxy filters down to the realm of popular Buddhism where imagination roves more freely.

792 785 626 779* Here, however, we are met by another objection which, if true, cancels the first. There are so few scholars, it is said, so few really learned *monks* that their influence is negligible. The ordinary monk is not scholarly enough. He is just as much swayed by primitive superstitions as the people he instructs or fails to instruct. He is idle, ignorant and often dissolute. The last criticism need not detain us. Nearly every book on Burma debates the character of the monks. Few fail to acknowledge that, in general, the monks live up to their ideal of chastity. Father Sangermano, who was certainly no indulgent critic, even goes further and suggests that in this respect they might serve as an example to the religious of his own Church. He adds that an offender is expelled by indignant villagers, 'even driving him away with stones' — an observation which reminds us that the most vigilant critics of the monks may be the Burmese people themselves.[43] The Burmese name for monk, *pōn-gyī*, means 'great glory.' Since there is no suggestion of priestly or Brahmanical power, since the value of the monks depends on their *kutho* and their *kutho* on their character, it is difficult to believe that they could have retained this title and the esteem in which they are generally held, if they had been as unworthy as some of their harsher critics suggest.[44] As to their knowledge, whilst nobody would claim that every wearer of the yellow robe is a scholar, we have only to glance at such a survey as Bode's *Pali Literature* to realise that there has been a persistent tradition of Pali learning in Burma since the eleventh century which tends to orthodoxy and could not have failed to impress itself, in some degree, on the mind of the people.

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[42] *The Vipassanā Dīpanī, or The Manual of Insight*, trans. by U Nyāna (Mandalay: no date).

[43] Op. cit., chaps. xiv, pp. 115–16.

[44] On the character of the monks, cf. *M.B.B.*, pp. 20, 21, 62; Bigandet, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 260, 270ff.; Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People*, chap. x, pp. 124ff.; Nisbet, *Burma under British Rule*, p. 147; Richards, *The Burman*, p. 24.

The Buddhism of Burma, then, lies in between two levels. On the one 779*
level, there is the scholarly tradition of the monasteries, frequently in
touch with Ceylon, watchful against heresies, pondering the scriptures, 792
upholding the essential emphases of the Hīnayāna tradition, steadily prevailing against more primitive ideas. On the other level, there is the survival of Animism, linked to the conservatism of human nature, infiltrating the popular Buddhism. We can, therefore, accept Burmese Buddhism as a valid and typical expression of the Hīnayāna tradition. At the same time, we can expect to find certain distinctive, Burmese features.

5. *Characteristics of Burmese Buddhism*

a. The characteristic of Burmese Buddhism which has been most 771
frequently remarked is its buoyancy. "The Buddhist faith may be as 779*
dreary ... as many say it is, but no one would imagine it who looks on
the gaily = dressed laughing crowd of men and maidens who throng to the [796]
pagoda feasts."[45] Only a Chaucer could do justice to these festivals, remarks a modern writer,[46] and an earlier observer concluded that "the Burmese do not fully believe the first of the Four Noble Truths that life is suffering."[47]

Climate and circumstance affect religious interpretation. In India, where Buddhism was begotten, "India, with its hot climate, its poverty and suffering, the pessimistic mood which looks upon life as a great evil rather than an achievable good, seems natural."[48] This may be. And in the subtropical climate of Burma, where people live in ephemeral bamboo houses and vegetation grows quickly and as quickly passes away, it is natural to believe that "All is change." But in Southern Burma at least, where a little labour wins a sufficient sustenance from the fruitful earth, and moonlight nights are soft and friendly, it is not so natural to add that "All is suffering."

Some observers insist that we must look beneath the surface of this Burmese gaiety. "Delightful as this sunny temperament is, it does not go deep enough to be called optimism."[49] Nobody, however, can question the Burmese vivacity — a vicacity which expresses itself in a lively, rhythmic music, and a delight in colour. "The secret of our happiness lies in our devotion to our beautiful religion," writes Mrs. Hla Oung, and the

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[45] Scott, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, chap. XIX, p. 257.
[46] G. Appleton, *Buddhism in Burma*, p. 46.
[47] *M.B.B.*, p. 15.
[48] A. K. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, chap. I, p. 49.
[49] *M.B.B.*, p. 53.

its national, character. The frequent festivals not only enliven, they 779*
express and stabilise the community life. They are often local, but certain 776
shrines, such as the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon, have become 621
centres of pilgrimage. In a country which has had a strong tendency to de-centralization — the king's authority was often very weak — the Buddhist Order has made for cohesion, and, in modern times, Buddhist monks have been active in the movement for national independence.

In spite, however, of this social expression, Buddhism in Burma, as 779*
elsewhere, is very much a matter of *individual* concern. We have seen 775
this individualism within the monastery. It is equally marked outside the monastery. One of the most popular *zats* is the story of Wethandaya, who, in order to gain his own salvation, gives away his wife and family to a rapacious Brahmin.[56] "Each must bear his own burden," is a favourite quotation.[57] Its primary reference may be to moral responsibility.

This brings us to the decidely *ethical* character of Burmese Buddhism. *Kutho* (worthiness) is the central concept here, and "it is clear that the Burmese Buddhists have a more *mathematical* conception of Merit than other folk." "The ordinary belief is very concrete — so many good deeds mean so much to one's credit in another world."[58] Sometimes very material rewards are indicated. "The reward for building a monastery is a palace in a *Nat* heaven with seven towers, and in this palace dwell seven hundred *Nat* wives.... For a gift of sticks for use in a bath room, the donor will be reborn with perfumed body."[59]

Almsgiving is a sure means of 'heaping up *Kutho*.' Since the benefit [735]
accruing to the donor partly depends on the worthiness of the object, the maintenance of religion is a valued means of self-help. Hence the many pagodas. Hence the gifts to the monasteries. There is no more coveted
title than 'Builder of Monasteries.' Hence, too, the welcome to the monk [792]
as he comes in the early morning with his begging bowl. The monk may *seem* to be the chief recipient. But in the things which matter, he is the donor.

Though others may thus provide the opportunity, essentially the activity is self-help. Emphasis is laid on individual responsibility. It is something a man must do for himself.

It is something he *can* do. Thus the conception of *Kutho* challenges any animistic idea that man is altogether at the mercy of capricious spirits.

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[56] *M.B.B.*, pp. 44, 103.

[57] *M.B.B.*, p. 45.

[58] *M.B.B.*, p. 51, p. 76. The usual, though inadequate translation of Kutho, as already observed, is Merit.

[59] *M.B.B.*, p. 51.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

779* 775* [792] doctrine of annihilation from his own reading of the Buddhist literature available to him and the exposition of a few, more instructed Buddhists? The latter would seem to be the case, for he speaks of 'Buddhist doctors' rather than 'Burmese doctors,' he refers specifically to a treatise he has translated and says that the monks in general "have no ardour for study." "I have met with a great number of laymen who were incomparably better informed."[21]

779* 775* 792 Yet the existence of many lax and ignorant monks — a circumstance which Bigandet attributes to the relaxation of that centralised discipline which had hitherto sustained the Order — does not mean that there were no devoted and zealous scholars at the same time. From other records we know that there were, and the Bishop himself refers to them. It is possible that they assisted him in his studies. He mentions visits to dignitaries. But it is also possible that some of these more able monks were amongst those who told him that a 'perfected being ... retains his individuality in Neibban' though unable to explain this condition further.

Later observers confirm Bishop Bigandet's conclusion that, in popular opinion, Nibbāna did not mean annihilation. It is a mystery, observes Sir George Scott, but it is not a "nothing." "Matter-of-fact Western heretics are mistaken when they conclude that the common illustration of the dying flame means annihilation." He cites an interesting funeral dirge, sung in Mandalay:

[539] Gone, gone art thou, sweet wife; gone far away ...
And yet again, in yet another birth,
I'll claim thee; when mayhap a happier *kan*,
A fairer sum of merit, hardly won,
Will lead us on, linked-armed, to linked death,
That so progressing, joyful we may run
Through all life's changes, and with single breath,
Through heavens and *zahn* and *rupa*, we may bound
To neh'ban, blissful home of rest.[22]

779* 775* In his popular, but well-informed accounts of Burmese life, Fielding Hall also emphasises this positive belief. "It is a hard teaching, this of the Buddha ... that when life goes out, this thing which we call "I" goes out with it.... To the Burmese villager that is not so. He cannot grasp, he cannot endure that it should be so."[23] In a later book, Fielding Hall suggests that there is, indeed, no reason why the Burmese villager should

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[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, footnote, p. 98, p. 252, p. 315.

[22] *The Burman, His Life and Notions* (1882), Vol. I, chap. XI, p. 125ff.; Vol. II, chap. XXXV, pp. 351, 352.

[23] *The Soul of a People*, chap. XXI, pp. 288, 289; chap. XXII, pp. 290, 291.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

think otherwise. Orthodoxy does not require it. The Buddha's teaching 779* has been misunderstood. "They thought his ideal was Death, yet it was 775* Life.... Only in Burma did the faith survive in somewhat of its early form."[24]

In a report published in 1914, replies to a questionnaire from some thirty correspondents indicate, according to the editors, "that there are inconsistencies in the current views." Buddhists in the Shan States, the Burmese borderland "hold a two-fold conception of Nirvana, conceptions that are absolutely contradictory, and are admitted to be so. They may all say that Nirvana is complete extinction of being ... and that the place or state is mysterious and inexplicable, and with the same breath they may, and do, call Nirvana the City of Gold, the Country of Happiness and Peace, a Home unutterably surpassing any earthly home." Their Burmese cousins are in similar case. "Agnosticism is the only orthodox attitude" but few are satisfied with this attitude. Thus, while some correspondents report that in popular opinion Nirvana signifies extinction of all being, others agree with Mr Charles Duroiselle that the great mass of the people 'believe in a life to come after the Arhat's death.' Mr Duroiselle adds that some of the monks, too, share this view, though others state that Nirvana is complete extinction and most of them say that it is a mystery: no one knows what it really is.[25]

We have, then, a series of reports, covering a century, by Western residents in Burma who made a serious attempt to discover what their Burmese neighbours really thought about Nibbāna. They begin with the report that Nibbāna signifies annihilation. But it is interesting to note that as time goes on this impression is qualified; positive as well as negative conceptions are discovered; and it is emphasised that Nibbāna spells mystery. Finally, we have a statement which is described as contradictory, but which, perhaps, might be better described as paradoxical.

3. *Popular ideas of Nibbāna*

We have now to consider the question introduced at the beginning of 775* this chapter: the relation between the popular conception of Nibbāna and 772● the teaching of the Saṃgha. The observations we have been considering 182 may seem to indicate a considerable divergence between the two. On the one hand we have a popular conception which is said to flout orthodoxy; on the other hand, there is the teaching of the monks which may be supposed to exalt orthodoxy.

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[24] *The Inward Light*, chap. xx, pp. 196, 198; cf. chap. xxii, pp. 219, 220.

[25] W. C. B. Purser and K. J. Saunders (editors), *Modern Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 48—50.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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Several consequent questions arise. How, for example, can we account for the persistence of this popular heresy, if indeed it be heresy, in view of the fact that the monastic Order is so influential? Heresies, it is true, flourish underground in every religion. But this 'heresy' is very much above ground. Are the monks themselves heretical, or the laity less heretical than they may appear to be?

Partial explanations will at once come to mind. Appeal may be made to the Buddhist emphasis on toleration, and further appeal may be made to the recognised distinction between what is expected of the layman and what is expected of the monk: the layman cannot be required to understand the truth which is only attained through monkish disciplines. These explanations are pertinent. But they are not sufficient.

The further explanation is to be found in certain undertones, certain basic tendencies, certain similarities of approach which influence monks and laity alike. These may be summed up and defined as the Agnostic Emphasis and the Ethical Emphasis. Making these emphases, though in different ways, learned bhikkus and simple villagers are in deeper, more effective sympathy than might be supposed if we merely isolate and regard their more explicit and divergent conceptions. In both cases, the resultant outlook is positive rather than negative. Hence the persistence of a lively popular faith which may seem at times to contradict its own basic dogmas.

In the following paragraphs, I shall select those results of my own inquiries which may elucidate this situation. I shall attempt to show how, in Burmese Buddhism, a fundamental agnosticism is derived in part from ethical considerations, and, secondly, how this agnosticism is associated with a positive faith, differently expressed but jointly affirmed by monk and layman, scholar and peasant.

The popular conception of Nibbāna will concern us first. But here there is need for discrimination. Whom have we in mind when we speak of this popular opinion? Burma is a country of villages, and we may conceive some very primitive peasant whose only concern is his rice field, his plough and his oxen. Over against such a simple peasant we may set the scholarly monk. But we must also bear in mind that large, intermediate class, already noted, which includes the more instructed layman and the less instructed monk.

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Nor should we exaggerate the simplicity of the Burmese villager. The Burmese may be a rural community, but they are also a civilised community, schooled and intelligent, very conscious of the difference between their conditions and the conditions of the surrounding, more primitive hill tribes. On the other hand, in seeking to estimate the popular opinion, we must be equally alert against the temptation to

777* and self-control — but not yet!"[31] The average Burman has not 775* renounced the world, he has not accepted the monastic discipline; and he knows it. Therefore he also knows that he cannot expect to share the greater understanding of those who *have* renounced the world.

Theoretically, maybe, even a layman may attain enlightenment.[32] But a wise instructor has likened the situation of the layman, exposed to the temptations of the world, to that of the traveller who was confronted by a tiger; the distractions and assaults of the world are tigerish.[33] The man who is in earnest will flee them. Even the monk, it is true, is not immune from these assaults. But the monk has a better chance. It is, then, the common view that if you really mean business, really mean to expedite progress towards Nibbāna, the obvious, sensible course is to join the Order. Those who have done so, those especially who have made some progress in the monastic life, the learned bhikkus, pursuing the hard disciplines of meditation, such may discern the distant shore of Nibbāna, such may hope to reach that shore, earlier than later: but not the householder, the man occupied by field or plough, wife or child. 'Undoubtedly every orthodox Buddhist hopes to obtain Nibbāna one day; but the monastic life is generally considered an essential condition for entry on the path to Nibbāna.'[34] It is only when one has followed this path some way that one can expect to know whither the path leads — if then. For the layman it is necessarily a distant prospect and a vague, mysterious concept. He is not worthy. He has not entered on the path which leads to 'the state of him who is worthy.' Therefore the layman is not presumptuous. [792 555] This is a subject to be left to the learned bhikkus, partly because they are learned, partly because they are bhikkus. The two recognitions are associated, recognition of the expert, recognition of the better man, for the Burman knows that the monastic discipline is a mental discipline, enjoining study and meditation, but he also knows that the necessary, prior condition is moral.

He knows, too, that the learned bhikkus themselves are hesitant on this subject. Not even they, notwithstanding their qualifications, can pretend to full knowledge. To them also, Nibbāna is ultimately a mystery.

The *very* learned bhikkus perhaps, the most devoted, can just discern

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[31] St Augustine, *Confessions* VIII. 7.

[32] *A. III*, 451 mentions twenty one laymen-Arahats; cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part I, p. 63, footnote.

[33] Bigandet, "The Seven Ways to Neibban," *op. cit.* Vol. 2, p. 236.

[34] de la Vallée Poussin, *Nirvana*, chap. 1, p. 3: "Sans doute tout bouddhiste orthodoxe espère obtenir un jour le Nirvana; mais la vie monastique est généralement considérée une condition essentielle de l'entrée dans le chemin du Nirvana."

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 API Burma
Burmese AP4

the Shore in the far, far distance, but whatever they may see, the little they see, defies communication. They cannot be expected to translate their vision into the language of everyday. All that the monk can do is to encourage you, by his example, to take the path yourself. That is what the Buddha himself did. Thus the village elder, as death approaches, will sometimes bethink himself and end his days in the monastery. A tardy beginning is better than none. It will not mean Nibbāna tomorrow, but it will mean a more definite step in the Way. 779* 775*

Here, perhaps, we have a further significance of the concept, a reminder that Nibbāna imports a challenge as well as a promise — a challenge to that better, nobler, more sensible Way which a man may have disregarded for the greater part of his life. Since the Goal is never to be separated from the Way, Nibbāna is the reminder of Dhamma. While it holds the promise of deliverance and peace, it rebukes all that postpones that deliverance and denies that peace.

Nibbāna, then, is Mystery, but it is nevertheless the concept which completes faith and inspires conduct. Agnosticism is here, but it belongs to faith, not to doubt; it is joined with affirmation, not with negation. Every invocation, every blessing, every devotion ends with Nibbāna, as does life itself. No gaudy heaven, however attractive, can take the place of the Great Peace.

4. '*The Learned Monks*'

We turn now to the ideas of the monks about Nibbāna, so far as they affect the popular view. This last qualification is necessary, for any attempt at a full examination of their ideas would take us beyond our province and beyond present possibilities. 792 775* 779*

The evidence here, must, therefore, be regarded as inconclusive, but it is perhaps sufficient to indicate further what has been suggested in the previous paragraphs: a basic agreement in approach and emphasis between monk and layman. For the learned bhikku, as well as for the villager, the final word is Mystery and the initial word an ethical emphasis, though for somewhat different reasons.

The monk has been more speculative. Duroiselle has suggested that, whilst the broader emphasis is agnostic, there has been a trend towards nihilistic interpretation.[28] But this may be doubted. It depends largely on how we regard such apparently negative terms as 'extinction' and 'cessation of existence.' Professor Pe Maung Tin and others have shown that these are not incompatible with a positive faith and an essential affirmation.

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[28] *M.B.B.*, p. 48.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 API Burma
Burmese AP4

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779* The learned bhikku is, of course, well aware that some of the questions raised are listed in the scriptures among those unprofitable questions, beyond determination, to which the Buddha himself deigned no answer.[36] Yet it is humanly impossible to pursue a discipline without pondering the goal of that discipline, and the monk is human enough at times to anticipate, from scripture and from his own present experience, what may lie ahead.

'Nirvana,' said a Burmese abbot to Professor Platt, 'is like a distant house of which we can see only the outside. What it is like within we cannot even guess; yet we know that it is real.'[37]

This sounds to me more like a layman's simile! Or perhaps the simile of a less instructed monk — not a learned bhikku! Unless I am much mistaken, the learned bhikku conceives of Nibbāna more in terms of the *life* to be realised than of the house in which it will be lived — a new quality of life rather than a place, a realm, a sphere, a heaven. His whole present discipline encourages such a direction of his thought. "The Buddhist ideal," wrote Rhys Davids, "is a subjective state, to be realised in this world."[38] It is, he added, the ideal to be attained by following the eight-fold Path, and whenever the Buddha was questioned about the aim of the zealous disciple's way of life, he replied by indicating the condition of the Arahat, the man who is worthy, and the Path which leads to this condition. Such a monk has attained the *sambodhi* — the Insight, wisdom, awakening which is essential to the higher stages of his progress. Whilst still in the Path, seeking this fulfilment, he is said to be *sambodhi-parayāno*.[39] When he has attained this condition, 'higher and sweeter, for the sake of which the brethren lead the religious life,' he is said, in the scriptures, to have destroyed the seven bonds which hinder such progress;[40] he has attained emancipation of heart and of mind;[41] he has a complete understanding of the nature and causes of sorrow (ill);[42] he wears the last body and has acquired perfect enlightenment;[43] thus set free he has the assurance: 'Rebirth has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After 792 ● this present life there will be no beyond';[44] he has, indeed, attained the 775* full Vision of Deliverance and can cheer and exhort others along the 779* Path.[45] His condition is summed up as a state of self-possession, investigation into the truth, energy, calm, joy, concentration and magnanimity.[46] And this condition, nothing more and nothing less, this, contends Rhys Davids, is Nibbāna. "It is not too much to say that Arahatship is Buddhism"[47] — a philosophy of life which aimed its keenest shafts at all forms of the supernatural and the mysterious and set before men an ideal of self-conquest, a 'final salvation . . . obtainable in this world and in this world alone.'[48]

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[36] Such questions belong to the 'jungle, the desert, the puppet show' of vain speculation: cf. E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, chap. X, p. 124.

[37] *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, chap. VII, p. 136.

[38] Cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part I, p. 190.

[39] D. 156 (cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part I, p. 193).

[40] A. IV 7 (cf. E. M. Hare *The Book of the Gradual, Sayings*, Vol. IV, p. 5).

[41] D. 156 (cf. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 201.)

[42] S. IV 51 (cf. Woodward, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, Part IV, pp. 26, 27).

[43] S. N. 478.

Now there is much in the apparent attitude of the Burmese Saṃgha to support Rhys David's interpretation. The devout bhikku certainly seems to hold before him the attainment of the Nibbāna-condition, the qualities of life which signify the Arahat. His conception of Nibbāna is very closely joined with this ideal. His immediate aim is to excel in the discipline which brings the ideal nearer, subduing the passions and employing the mind in those exercises which belong to the Path.

But two questions arise. The first is the question whether he really [785] expects to realise this ideal and obtain this final salvation in this present life. Theoretically, no doubt, it is possible. In a reference to the *Abhiññā*, [787] the supernormal insight which is attained by the Arahat, the Lēdī Sayādaw insists that in the Buddhist Scriptures we find, clearly shown, the means towards attaining the five supernatural faculties. That we do not see any person endowed with these today, "is due to the lack of strenuous physical and mental exertion towards their attainment."[49] A zealous missioner, held in the highest esteem throughout Burma,[50] few have done more in modern times than the Lēdī Sayādaw himself to encourage his compatriots, whether monks or laymen, to seek the Path. Yet it may be questioned whether he ever really expected any of his followers to attain the supernatural faculties in this present life. In another treatise he warns against false confidence.

"It is ... very difficult to become aware of the attainment of the Paths and of the Fruits. In fact even the Ariyan (saint) who has attained

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[44] D. 156 (cf. Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, part I, p. 204).

[45] M. i. 146 (cf. Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, Vol. I, p. 103.)

[46] Rhys Davids, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

[47] *American Lectures*, chap. IV, p. 151.

[48] *Dialogues of the Buddha*, pp. 141ff.

[49] *Questions on Karma*; cf. comment in *M.B.B.*, p. 46.

[50] Cf. Thirkell-White, *A Civil Servant in Burma* (1913), chap. XI., p. 197.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

792 the First Path hardly knows that he has become an attainer of the Path-
775* of-the-Stream. Why? Because of the unfathomableness of the latent
period of the Defilements. Those Yogis or meditators who do not know
779* the unfathomableness of the latent period of the Defilements, sometimes think themselves to be attainers of Path-of-the-Stream, while as yet their erroneous views and perplexity are only partially, but not completely, put away...."

While, therefore, he enjoins that the exercises which lead to insight and sanctity must be steadfastly practised 'for the whole time of life' he does not promise that the goal will be attained before death.

"If meditators practise these exercises for the whole term of life, their knowledge will be developed till they pass beyond the Puthujjana-bhūmi (the state of the ordinary, unenlightened man) and arrive at the Ariyabhūmi either before death or at the time of death, *either in this life or the life following*, in which latter they will be reborn as Devas."[51]

[785] Vainglory is forbidden the Buddhist monk. He must not claim for himself any superior sanctity or perfection, and there is certainly no record in modern times of any bhikku claiming Arahatship. Nor does he seem to expect the 'full Vision of Deliverance' in this present life. At best it will come in the life following. If Nibbāna is not for him quite such a distant view as it is for the layman, it is, nevertheless, no immediate prospect. And for the same fundamental, ethical reason. He is not worthy. But rebirth will give him another chance, a further opportunity: the partial progress he has made in this present life is not in vain. We may compare him with the Christian who hopes for heaven, but not at death; some further, intermediate, purgatorial stage, he conceives, must come in between.

The question arises whether this deliverance is conceived in terms of death or in terms of future, fuller life. Nibbāna clearly means extinction — extinction, certainly, of those cravings and false allurements which chain man to his present fevered existence. Until the Defilements are underfoot there is no prospect of any *ariyabhūmi*. Every bhikku believes that. No man is emancipated until base passions and befooling hallucinations are conquered. But what then? Is the Nibbāna condition but the brief enjoyment of this experience of emancipation until death terminates the short spell of life in which the emancipation is attained? Is it, as some have said, merely the conquest of the fear of death and the lust of immortality, a conquest achieved in this Nibbāna-condition? Or is it the conquest of death itself, the extinction of death together with existence, introducing a new quality of Life beyond destructive change as

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[51] *The Vipassanā Dīpanī*, pp. 69, 70.italics mine.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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it is beyond our present knowledge? For the Burmese bhikku, is Nibbāna annihilation or Eternal Life?

With these questions in my mind, I set out in Christmas week, 1933, to interview a Sayādaw in a small Burmese town on the Irrawaddy river. The interview had been arranged by a young Buddhist layman, who held this Sayādaw in great esteem for his character and learning. There followed a full afternoon's discussion, which is quoted here as typical of others, and, for me at least, more illuminating than most — a discussion in which honest comparison was attempted. On the one hand, there was the Christian ideal of an Eternal quality of life, a heavenly life fore-tasted here and now; on the other hand, there was 'the complex ideal of Arahatship, or Nibbāna-under-present-conditions, a super-normal evolution of faculties combined with, not to say resulting from, ethical purity.'[33]

There were some interesting points of contact. In both Ways a progress was conceived. In both cases it might be said that earlier experience included some anticipation, some present, partial realisation of the ultimate, higher condition which was the goal. In both, the goal was descried but could not be described. In both, there were similar distinctions. Eternal, heavenly Life could be distinguished from 'mere existence'; the life with the Nibbāna aim, could be distinguished from the life which made no effort to break from the fetters and chain of existence. There were also approximate ethical comparisons: the Christian 'fruits of the Spirit,' could be compared with the Buddhist conception of ethical advance.

From time to time, the Sayādaw emphasised that the basic, essential condition, from his point of view, was the conquest of craving. In so far as any man extinguished *taṇhā*, he said tolerantly, he was bound to realise some higher stage, whatever his religious beliefs. It passed through my mind that this was an indication, not only of his attitude to myself, but to the simple villagers arranged around us. In his view, we were in similar case: people still much clouded by hallucinations and still concerned with irrelevant religious beliefs. But in so far as these religious beliefs encouraged ethical effort there was some hope for us: Christian ideas of heaven and popular conceptions of Nebban were in the same category. And this attitude probably reflected the attitude of the learned bhikkus generally to 'popular Buddhism.'

More illuminating, perhaps, than our points of contact, were our points of disagreement and our failures to make such contact.

There was nothing in the Sayādaw's conception which corresponded to the Christian belief in communion with Christ as the condition of

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[33] Mrs. Rhys Davids, Preface to *Compendium of Philosophy*, p. xx.

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note on SHWE ZAN AUNG

114 Besides translating (in collaboration with Mrs Rhys Davids) the *Katthā-Vatthu* and the *Abhidhammattha-Saṃgaha* for the Pali Text Society, with
775 an Introductory Essay to the latter, Shwe Zan Aung published, in instalments, in the *Journal of the Burma Research Society* (1917) a study of "The
792 Buddhist Philosophy of the Real" and followed this up by the "Dialogue on Nibbāna," which I have quoted in chapter III. Born in 1871 at Akyab, he graduated from Rangoon College in 1892 and was later appointed a Magistrate in Henzada.

"My colleage," wrote Mrs Rhys Davids, "has been in close touch with several very learned monks, including the distinguished Doctor, Ledi Sadaw, in a country where the study of Abbidhamma, or philosophy, is cultivated more than elsewhere. Bhikkus from Ceylon come now, as in days of old, to study philosophy under the Theras of Burma, so renowned are the latter for proficiency in this subject. Mr Aung has also, through a course of study necessarily limited ...... assimilated a notable purview of our own philosophic tradition. He is thus better fitted than most Oriental students to translate into our vehicles of expression the living meaning, as distinguished from the *etymological* connotation, of Buddhist philosophical terms."[1] "I have," wrote Shwe Zan Aung himself, in his last note in the *Compendium,* "no theories of my own. ... I am acting only as the mouthpiece of my country's teachers. At best I am but an interpreter of Burmese views based on the Ceylon Commentary and the works of Buddhaghosa. You may take my essay as medieval Buddhism presented through modern glasses."[2]

This may have been true enough of the essay in question — the introductory essay to the Compendium. But in his 'Buddhist Philosophy of the Real' he certainly presented theories of his own which aroused considerable controversy at the time. His studies in Western philosophy, to which Mrs Rhys Davids referred, led him to conclude that there were marked affinities between Buddhist thought on the one hand, and Bergson and Bertrand Russell on the other hand. Bergson and Russell — a strange alignment! as Shwe Zan Aung's critics remarked. But Aung saw a comparison between Buddhism and Bergson's concept of durée and also between the Bergsonian and Buddhist emphasis on intuition, while Russell's relational logic resembled, to his mind, Buddhist logic. Both Bergson and Russell are said to have been interested in these comparisons from Burma.[3]

Aung's principal critic was Dr. G.R.T. Ross, who accused Aung of attempting to 'force an identity between the doctrines of these modern writers and Buddhism.' Ross wrote, that passages quoted by Aung himself

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[1] Editor's Preface, *The Compendium of Philosophy,* pp. XIII, XIV.

[2] *Compendium of Philosophy:* Note 'On Authority in Buddhist Belief,' p. 283.

[3] Cf. *J.B.R.S.* Vol. VII, Part III, p. 229; Vol. VIII, part III, p. 266.

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showed that the Buddhist 'criterion of reality is permanence, that of unreality is impermanence.'[4] Aung had quoted Buddhaghosa: "There is nothing permanent and constant like Nibbāna". (If Aung can be said to have disregarded this interpretation of Nibbāna in his essay, he certainly did not do so in his Dialogue).

The criticism aroused a spirited reply, including a confession of orthodoxy. "Dr Ross thinks that I am dissatisfied with the present attitude of traditional Buddhism. Buddhist writers are conservative.... Now and again, we may have a controversy amidst our own ranks owing to different interpretations of one and the same passage. But the more I study traditional Buddhism as it has come down to us in writings, the more I have reason to be satisfied with it."[5]

This reply was published in the same year as his Dialogue. It seems clear that he regarded the Dialogue as a fair presentation of Saṃgha discussions. His own view is partly reflected in U Agga's opinions, but he also suggests that these opinions have roots in the past, while Sumana, the exponent of the Ledi school, speaks for more recent opinion. At the same time Sumana voices the objection emphasised by Ross that Nibbāna cannot be conceived as flux.

In the controversy, Aung had an ally in Professor K.M.Ward who emphasised both the reliability and significance of Shwe Zan Aung as an interpreter of Burmese Buddhism. Mrs Rhys Davids, said Ward, was dissatisfied with her own translation of Buddhist psychology. She felt that she had not been able to understand the traditional terms. Hence her collaboration with Aung in the 'Compendium.' "This book revolutionised the methods of Pali research," wrote Ward, "I think it safe to say that no western scholar of repute would now attempt a translation of the all-important Abhidhamma or other technical works without colleborating with someone on the spot — in Burma or Ceylon. U Shwe Zan Aung then inaugurated the new movement. He did not as Dr Ross would have his readers suppose .. give us dogmatically high sounding philosophical terms (whose substitution in the older translations immediately made sense of them). On the contrary he collected a number of definitions, sentences, quotations in which the disputed term appeared: he explained the traditional meanings to his English editor, ... By this means a near modern equivalent to the Buddhist term was generally found... What we want is more of such work."[6]

Besides his close contacts with the Saṃgha scholars, Aung collaborated, too, with another distinguished Pali translator, U Pe Maung Tin. As we have seen, Lēdī Sayādaw was among the scholars he consulted, and Lēdī's own work has had a wide influence on modern Burmese thought. Aung takes note of this, but he distinguishes it from earlier schools. There are grounds, then, for the conclusion that Shwe Zan Aung is himself the more reliable interpreter of the Burmese tradition as a whole.

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[4] *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, Part I, pp. 57ff.

[5] *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, Part II, pp. 166ff.

[6] *J.B.R.S.*, Vol. VIII, Part III, pp. 263ff.